

THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY GERMAN IMMIGRATION MOVEMENT
INTO THE UNITED STATES

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PREFACE

This study was begun as the result of a year's grant from the Bonn government of Germany, which involved some special project or undertaking. During my year's study, an attempt was made to collect German immigrant letters and other documents illustrating special problems in German-American immigration. The best collections found were in the archives at Speyer and Ludwigsburg. Dr. Fritz Braun of the Heimatstelle Pfaalz at Kaiserslautern has made an extensive collection of German immigrant letters, which he would not allow to be copied, except limited parts, some of which are included her.

Other contemporary sources were provided by the Ohio Historical and Philosophical Society, which has many primary source works which stirred up emigration from Germany. The Cincinnati Volksblatt and the German Anzeige Blatt provide representative source material for attitudes and reactions to the change of a homeland.

I have attempted to integrate the source material into the general process of immigration, as revealed by secondary material. Thus the general organization has been to present an overall view of the German immigration, then to trace this from its origins through the trip to America to the final arrival in America. An attempt is then made to recreate from the sources which influenced the German the image and lure of America. Finally, the Cincinnati German is used to illustrate the characteristics and problems of a typical German immigrant population.

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CHAPTER I
CAUSES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF GERMAN IMMIGRATION
1815-1900

A vital part of the American nation consists of immigrants from various countries. But perhaps no other country has exerted such a great influence upon American life as has Germany.¹ By 1930, it was estimated that natives of Germany living in the United States² comprised nearly 18% of the total "Foreign White Stock," or 6,873,103.³ By 1927 Albert Faust⁴ calculated that natives of Germany constituted a little more than one fourth of the entire foreign element or 25.8%. The native Germans were slightly over their average in the North Central and South Atlantic divisions where they comprised 35.1% and 33.7% of the population respectively. In the West they formed 16% of the entire foreign population remaining, however, the most numerous foreign element.⁵ Even in the South the Germans are more numerous than any other non-native element.⁶

¹The term Germany as used in this thesis will concern the geographical area that today is East and West Germany. It will be used as a term of convenience without meaning a politically unified nation, which did not exist prior to 1871. It will mean any or all of the states and principalities which were inhabited by German peoples, excluding Austria and Switzerland.

²Called German stock, defined as native Germans and Americans with one or more parents native born.

³John A. Hawgood, The Tragedy of German-America. London: Putnam's Sons, 1940, p. 60.

⁴Albert Bernhardt Faust, The German Element in the United States (2 vols.). New York: The Stoupen Society of America, 1927, I, p. 575.

⁵Statistics will differ before and after 1930 in determining the number of foreign stock. In the census before 1930, the prerequisite in determining foreign stock was the possession of both a father and mother of foreign and the same foreign nationality. After this time all natives are classified as to the father's nationality.

⁶Edward Alsworth Ross, The Old World in the New. New York: Century Co., 1914, p. 49.

The significance of the German immigration can perhaps best be illustrated by the fact that in the ten year period of 1845-54 alone nearly three million immigrants flooded into a country with a total population of only twenty million, and the Germans formed the greatest single ingredient. Thus the German has been able to retain first position among all foreign born groups, though never among the first five incoming groups between 1890-1920, up to 1920.⁷

This general distribution of the German is more characteristic of the German immigration than of any other for no other foreign element is so dispersed. By 1913, a third were located between Boston and Pittsburgh, fifty-five per cent living between Pittsburgh and Denver, seven per cent in the South and five per cent in the Far West.⁸

The German immigration is even more directly linked to United States history, for not only did the 19th century bring more German immigrants to American shores than any other group, but America became the goal for most of the emigration from the "Fatherland." From 1820 to 1930 nine-tenths of the Germans who departed overseas went to the United States, nearly 6,000,000 in all. The next country, Canada drew only 200,000, with Brazil close behind, and Argentina following with 150,000. Some Germans left for Australia and Africa, but not totaling 45,000.⁹

⁷Hawgood, op. cit., p. 69.

⁸Ross, op. cit., p. 49.

⁹Maurice R. Davis, World Immigration With Special Reference to the United States. New York: MacMillan Company, 1936, p. 70.

The tremendous impact on Germany was unavoidable, for emigration sometimes carried off one-third, but on the average one-seventh of the natural increase in population.¹⁰ Approximately 56 per cent of these were males and only 44 per cent female,¹¹ and so the loss to Germany was often of potential workers. Many immigrants were relatively young, and "were men who, if they had been tolerated, would have become influential in the public life of their native land."¹² Occasionally the German governments realized their plight and sought to restrict the flow, as occurred by 1829.¹³

A study of immigration statistics reveals what might be considered several waves of immigration, both for Europe as a whole and for Germany. A slight German immigration began to increase until it reached a total in the 1830's of 152,000, with 1837 a peak year.¹⁴ After 1845, another wave had begun to swell, which did not reach its maximum until 1854. Reports from such sources as the German Society of New York confirm the fact that 1854 marked the peak of the German immigration before the Civil War. Friedrich Kapp, a Forty-eighter who became a member of the Immigration Commission of New York, estimated the total German influx from 1845 to 1854 at slightly over a quarter million.¹⁵

¹⁰Ibid., p. 66.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 70-71.

¹²Faust, op. cit., p. 587.

¹³Hawgood, op. cit., p. 62.

¹⁴"Statistical Review of Immigration, 1820-1910," in Reports of the Immigration Commission. Senate Documents, 61st Congress, 3rd Session, No. 756. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1911, p. 19.

¹⁵Carl Wittke, Refugees of Revolution. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1952, p. 43.

In the three years 1853-55, almost half a million people, or 4.48 per 1000 left Germany annually.¹⁶ The record year of 1854 alone brought in 215,000.¹⁷

Another wave reached its crest in 1873 with 150,000,¹⁸ when the German wars combined with general economic causes to strengthen the migratory impulse.¹⁹ But the record year was yet to come with the next wave when in the 1880's nearly 1,350,000 persons left, with 250,000 in 1882.²⁰ The numbers then drop to less than a half by 1884, never to exceed 124,000 in this century.²¹

By 1900, emigration Germany became a country of immigration, since the rise of great manufacturing industries and the development of commerce and transportation acted as great reservoirs to hold the increased population in Germany. Emigration was succeeded by a movement inside the country from rural to urban areas, from agriculture to industry, and from east to west.²² But the flow to America became insignificant.

A characteristic of the German immigration is its mid-nineteenth century occurrence. In the fifty years from 1840 to 1889, over seventy

¹⁶ Davie, op. cit., p. 66.

¹⁷ "Statistical Review," op. cit., p. 25.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 31.

¹⁹ Davie, op. cit., p. 66.

²⁰ "Statistical Review," op. cit., p. 34.

²¹ Ibid., pp. 34-40.

²² Davie, op. cit., p. 67.

per cent of Germany's emigration took place. Between 1850 and 1869 nearly one third (1,700,000 out of nearly six million, or 29 per cent) of all Germans emigrating in the 19th century did so in these twenty years.²³

Another characteristic becomes apparent when one compares the figures for German emigration with the total movement to America. There is little discrepancy in the proportion of numbers flowing into the United States from Germany and from entire Europe, except in 1829, 1841, and 1871. In these years special conditions in Germany not common to all Europe, provide the explanation. The attempts at restriction by various German governments seem to have succeeded by 1829; renewed hopes for better times followed the accession of Frederick William IV in 1840; Germany was absorbed in the Franco-Prussian War in 1871, and emigration became more difficult.²⁴

The waves of European immigration reached their peaks in 1854 with 428,000; 1873, with 460,000; and 1882, with 789,000.²⁵ These peaks corresponded with those of German immigration. The curve of German emigration runs, on its lower level, roughly parallel to that of emigration to the United States as a whole up to 1895, by which time it had sunk to sixteen per cent of the total, only to become four

²³Hawgood, op. cit., p. 58.

²⁴Ibid., p. 62.

²⁵"Statistical Review," op. cit., pp. 25, 31, 34.

per cent and then three per cent by the first two decades of the twentieth century.²⁶ The same period saw a decline from Europe as a total, but not so precipitous as with the Germans.

As a part of the "Old Immigration," the German became increasingly more significant as he gradually replaced the strength of the Irish.²⁷ At the beginning of the 19th century, the Irish were overwhelmingly in the lead, composing nearly half of the total immigrant stream during the eighteen forties,²⁸ and outnumbering Germans and British combined. These three groups included over eighty-eight per cent of all immigrants. It was in the fifties that the Germans began to take the lead and the Irish began to drop behind. In the sixties, it was still these three leading groups that furnished seventy-nine per cent of the whole.²⁹

By 1860, Germany commanded the top position in number of immigrants, which she held until 1890, followed by Ireland, except for the decade of the 70's when England sent more than the Irish.³⁰

The origin of the German immigration was largely, up to 1848 and to a lesser extent to 1866, from western and southern Germany, especially the southwest corner. It was less from the east and north-east excepting the German Polish areas which consistently showed an

²⁶Hawgood, op. cit., p. 57.

²⁷Ibid., p. 67.

²⁸Faust reports (p. 582) that the German immigration was about 24% and the Irish 42% from 1841 to 1850. But from 1851 to 1860 the Germans began to surpass the Irish and continued to do so.

²⁹Hawgood, op. cit., p. 67.

³⁰Davie, op. cit., p. 55.

emigration to the United States very much above the average for all Germany.³¹ The Palatinate and Swabia furnished the principal contingents, for these regions suffered from wars and devastation, the political desperation in the democratic movements' failure brought suffering, and crop failures on small peasant farms in an overpopulated area drove more to desperation.³² But the efficient state machine in Prussia provided political security and economic reform and thus less incentive to emigrate.³³

Even in the 1840s, emigration spread to the western states of Hesse, the Rhineland, Westphalia, and Thuringia, regions with a minute subdivision of landed property and lying near the main arteries of traffic. As transportation developed, a greater human current began to flow from central and eastern Germany.

Emigration reached a crest in the east in the 1870's and 1880's. The exodus from southwestern Germany remained comparatively high, but another emigration center had developed in the northeast, where large landed estates and large-scale cultivation left no room for a middle class.³⁴

Once in the United States the German sought out and avoided certain areas. A study of German settlements reveals a belt beginning with Pennsylvania and running due west through Ohio, Indiana, Illinois,

³¹Hawgood, op. cit., p. 74.

³²Davie, op. cit., p. 69.

³³Hawgood, op. cit., p. 75.

³⁴Davie, op. cit., p. 69.

Wisconsin, Iowa, and Missouri. The Germans generally avoided the southern states, which produced unfamiliar products, while they could understand the cultivation of wheat, rye, oats, and other northern products. The land in the South was held by large landowners who rarely sold, and free labor was degraded by competitions with slave labor, and the climate was unfavorable. Also since the Germans were searching for work, and for land, this belt was the area most satisfactory.³⁵ The disapproval of slavery was made apparent by the refusal of Southerner-Germans to own slaves in the slave states, and by their avoidance of this area.³⁶

It is characteristic of emigration that it follow the lines of least resistance, that is, those in which the fewest natural obstacles in the way of mountains, deserts, seas and dense forests have been encountered.³⁷ The German movement can be traced, in this period of western expansion with the opening of new areas, along the routes of the Erie canal.³⁸

An understanding of the immigration movement is incomplete without an analysis of the causes, the forces that motivated Germans to leave their homeland. Many economic and political conditions at home offered a push, but the attraction of a new home was also a vital

³⁵Kate Asaphine Everest, "How Wisconsin Came By Its Large German Element," Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, XII. Madison: Democrat Printing Co., 1892, p. 311.

³⁶Hawgood, op. cit., p. 50.

³⁷James Bryce, "The Migrations of the Races of Men," The Contemporary Review, July, 1892, p. 138.

³⁸Carl Wittke, We Who Built America. New York: Prentice Hall, 1939, p. 189.

factor. Thus travel books, pamphlets, "America Letters" stimulated an interest in America as a new home.

The conditions in Germany, largely economic, at various times in the 1800's provided a strong motive to seek a home elsewhere, but only when conditions in the recipient country were advantageous. Faust finds that the increase in German immigration corresponds to a period of economic decline in certain parts of Germany and to a contemporaneous era of prosperity in the United States. Similarly, a decrease in the immigration occurred during any period of depression in the U. S., especially if prosperity existed in the homeland.³⁹

Although immigration statistics do not exist before 1820, the immigration from Germany between 1790-1820 was probably slight, but increasing from 1810 to 1820, at least enough to cause an official count to be instituted at the seaports from 1820 on.⁴⁰

European conditions provided a reason for anguish. The wars had exhausted southern Germany, from which French armies had absorbed the products of family workshops and village factories. To make matters worse, tariff barriers were inaugurated, causing loss of employment, and "Among such workers the spirit of emigration quickly spread."⁴¹ A renewal of personal connections and communications resulted in

³⁹Faust, op. cit., p. 582.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Marcus Lee Hansen, The Atlantic Migration. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1941, p. 81.

invitations to join overseas groups, and the peace treaty, in Article XVII,⁴² provided an impetus.⁴³

In 1817, the harvest was scanty, and the states along the Rhine were most affected. Bad weather prevented reinforcements from arriving; many emigrated.⁴⁴ In 1819 oppressive measures were brought to bear on suspected liberals. Baden, Wurttemberg, Bavaria, Hesse-Darmstadt, and the Rhineland were most offended, and many departed to England and America.⁴⁵ But compared to the emigration from the revolutions of 1830 and 1848, the numbers were few and these Germans were rapidly absorbed in the American population.

The severe winters of 1825 and 1826 exhausted supplies in southwestern Germany, which never produced an abundance of grain, were mirrored in an upturn of American immigration in 1827 and the peak year of 1828. The problem became serious enough that ship captains, experiencing passengers with inadequate funds for passage, spread pessimistic reports to keep immigration down. The result was the number of passengers declined the following season.⁴⁶

Emigration from Germany rocketed from 2,400 in 1831 to a peak of 10,194 the next year. This marks the time when disorder and revolution

⁴²Article XVII allowed six years for the inhabitants of districts which had been transferred to a new allegiance to leave without paying a property emigration tax. Thousands departing chose America as their destination. See Faust, p. 81.

⁴³Faust, op. cit., p. 81.

⁴⁴Hansen, op. cit., pp. 86-87.

⁴⁵George M. Stephenson, A History of American Immigration, 1820-1924. Boston: Ginn and Company, 1926, p. 46.

⁴⁶Hansen, op. cit., p. 121.

have effected an emigration to a large extent. Despondency and bitterness succeeded after political hopes failed in 1830.⁴⁷ The era of the 30's was filled with liberal refugees who escaped to the U. S., among them were the Wesselhofts of Philadelphia, Gustav Korner, Friedrich Munch, Friedrich Engelsmann, Ferdinand Jakob Lindheimer, and many others who were involved in political activities in the 30's.⁴⁸ But political conditions alone do not account for the large emigration, which reached 17,000 by 1834 and 23,740 by 1837.⁴⁹ The Carlsbad Decrees and Vienna Final Act were not without influence, but the land hunger in western Germany as a result of the Code Napoleon's subdivision of soil drove many to a land where there was a land boom and cheap land, and where the Erie canal and other projects afforded job opportunities.⁵⁰

Even the Panic of 1837 failed to dissuade most, for the attraction of America was a greater force than submitting to conditions at home since a famine as severe as that of 1816 was anticipated. Thus Europeans refused to believe the reports that all was not well in America.⁵¹ The panic thus was only a slight setback,⁵² and 21,000

⁴⁷Davie, op. cit., p. 121.

⁴⁸Carl Friedrich, "The European Background," in A. E. Zucker, ed., The Forty-Eighters, Political Refugees of the German Revolution of 1848. New York: Columbia University Press, 1950, pp. 10-11.

⁴⁹"Statistical Review," op. cit., pp. 19-20.

⁵⁰Hawgood, op. cit., p. 63.

⁵¹Hansen, op. cit., p. 135.

⁵²Hawgood, op. cit., p. 63.

departed for American shores in 1839.⁵³

Most scholars agree that economic rather than political conditions determine the emigration from Germany in the nineteenth century, and that religious reasons almost completely disappear. Yet the late 30's and early 40's produce several noticeable exceptions. The first cause of the movement to Wisconsin was religious rather than political or economic. Some congregationists of Old Lutherans were the earliest arrivals, finding discrimination at home and seeking what appeared the freedom of the American system of government.⁵⁴ These first groups originated in Prussia where Frederick William III's compromise between the Lutheran and German Reformed Church failed to suit them, but they affected congregations in Pomerania, Posen, Magdeburg and Berlin, areas that had not earlier contributed emigrants. They helped to fill the emigration stream of 1839 and 1840, bringing further settlers after 1840 from Mecklenburg, Baden, and Wurtemberg. In the stream from 1843-45, economic and social reasons added a further incentive, for many of the Old Lutherans departing from Silesia were weavers, and unemployment must have been the dominating cause in view of the depression in the linen industry.⁵⁵

The emigration of the "Old Lutherans" is significant primarily because the emigration that followed was the beginning of that from

⁵³ "Statistical Review," op. cit., p. 21.

⁵⁴ Joseph Schafer, Wisconsin Domesday Book, A History of Agriculture in Wisconsin. Madison: State Historical Society, 1922, p. 52.

⁵⁵ Hansen, op. cit., pp. 136-40.

northeastern Germany, not only to Wisconsin, but to America.⁵⁶

One widely publicized religious exodus was that of Martin Stephe, a Pietist and religious mystic from Dresden. Caught in the act of holding illegal meetings of his followers, he was suspended, and sought passage for his followers to America.⁵⁷ By September 4, 1838 over 700 persons had announced their intentions to emigrate and five ships left Bremerhaven headed for New Orleans, where only four arrived.⁵⁸ The success of the Stephanists in America aroused further interest, and by 1841 another emigration followed.⁵⁹

Encouraging reports from America drew another religious group across the Atlantic. Jewish communities had long been accustomed to seeing their young men depart for other countries or even America. Restricted in the number of licenses they could obtain to engage in business, and by 1828 forbidden in Wurtemberg and Bavaria to sell property which had not been occupied or farmed by them for three years, many Jews emigrated at the end of the 1830's. The succeeding years brought even more, but by then the prevailing depression rather than

⁵⁶Kate Everest Levi, "Geographical Origin of German Immigration to Wisconsin," Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, XIV. Madison: State Printer, 1898, 1898, p. 343.

⁵⁷Hansen, op. cit., p. 136.

⁵⁸Friederich Schnake, "Die Einwanderung der Sachsen," Der Deutsche Pionier. July, 1874, V. 6, pp. 157-60.

⁵⁹Hansen, op. cit., p. 137.

persecution affected their decision.⁶⁰

During the forties, several factors led to great distress. The land problem had become more acute and many farmers sought to save their sons by emigration. The German farmer began to reason that an equal division of land among six children would reduce the status of each, while in America the family savings from the sale of the land sufficed to buy for every child a farm as large as the paternal estate in Germany.⁶¹

Crop failures and the arrival of the machine age turned eyes toward the America of prosperity, "gold," and other images conjured up by the transatlantic lines and by railroad propaganda.⁶² In 1842 a drought withered pasturage, and cattle had to be killed, removing the source of meat, milk and cheese. The potato crop was small and by spring principal supplies were gone. As a result many who could find purchasers for their holdings emigrated in haste. In 1843, although conditions improved somewhat, many suffered actual starvation. However, the main fear centered in ruin from the potato disease which had been ravaging the Rhine potato each season since 1829.⁶³

Emigration began to sharply increase in 1846 when 57,600 compared with only 34,000 in the previous year sought a new life in America.

⁶⁰Ibid., pp. 139-40.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 214.

⁶²Hawgood, op. cit., p. 63.

⁶³Hansen, op. cit., p. 220.

The increase continued into the next year with a record high of 74,000.⁶⁴ The immediate motivation stemmed from the suffering during the winter of 1846 and 1847, when many factory districts were obliged to depend on charity, and farmers faced more high prices. Fear of even greater distress prevailed.⁶⁵ Reports described the general reaction as a public "seized with a panic." The force of this current of immigration led Congress in February of 1847 to pass an act subjecting vessels arriving in the U. S. after May 1 with more passengers than set by law to confiscation.⁶⁶

The German revolution of 1848 and 1849 is especially significant, for it began a large stream of immigrants into America, most of whom reached her shores in the early fifties. The problem which is greatest in determining the motives for the emigration revolves around the comparative political and economic incentives. Professor Zucker claims that the "true Forty-eighter was a political being,"⁶⁷ for the immigrants before 1848 had shown little interest in politics, and this group of immigrants aroused the hostility or indifference of their fellow Germans in America because of their liberal aims and ardent convictions.⁶⁸

⁶⁵Hansen, op. cit., p. 252.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 253.

⁶⁷Hildegard Binder Johnson, "Adjustment to the United States," in Zucker, ed., The Forty-Eighters, p. 22.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 50.

While this is probably true, the disturbed political conditions of Western Europe only provided another powerful motive to the primary economic cause. The voyage to America represented in part a "flight from hunger," or at least an escape to greater economic freedom and security. For such less articulate and less cultured fellow countrymen the political refugees provided essential leadership during a period when conditions in America beckoned.⁶⁹ The fact that German departures in 1848 were less than in 1847 might seem to prove that freedom was the motive for the emigration, and that the refugees were awaiting the outcome of the struggle, were it not for the abnormal port conditions and a war in the Danish duchies that made emigration hazardous.⁷⁰ In addition, an emigration is usually a year or more behind the immediate cause.

The years immediately before 1848 reveal serious labor disturbances and bread and potato riots in many cities. There had been a series of crop failures and a period of high prices and unemployment. The potato rot struck at the food supply of the masses. Potato prices rose 425%, wheat prices 250%, and barley approximately 300%. The introduction of labor saving machinery caused unemployment, and competition of infant German industries with advanced ones in England and Belgium brought failure to many more. The city proletariat had by 1848 emerged as a new factor in the national economy, but labor

⁶⁹Wittke, Refugees of Revolution, p. 2, 3.

⁷⁰Hansen, op. cit., p. 274.

unions had not yet emerged to voice the grievances of the new working class. The smashing of machines by irate and unemployed workers demonstrated discontent in major cities throughout Germany.⁷¹

A large number of American Forty-eighters were leaders in the popular demonstrations against the monarchy, some belonging to local diets or the Frankfurt Parliament, and others publicists and editors, or commanders of troops.⁷² Yet the political refugees emigrating number only a few thousand, while the greater part of the emigration was composed of peasants, workers, and artisans from regions where reaction was not most pronounced.⁷³

Government policy served as an impetus to the migration. Local and state governments encouraged the dissatisfied, agitators, paupers, troublemakers, and paupers to leave, and in Hesse-Kassel, minor offenders were released on condition that they depart for America.⁷⁴ Even the legislation passed, acquiescing to the demand for reform of the feudal system, motivated departure. The obligation of the peasants to deliver a part of his yield to his landlord each harvest was severed, requiring the payment of a capital sum to the lord in order to obtain freedom from the obligation. But since even thrifty Germans did not have that much money, official land banks lent the capital

⁷¹Wittke, Refugees of Revolution, p. 25.

⁷²Ibid., p. 20.

⁷³Hansen, op. cit., p. 274.

⁷⁴Wittke, Refugees of Revolution, pp. 44-46.

for mortgages on the property. This essentially meant the peasant had been turned over to a new master. By 1849, the willingness to sacrifice belongings in order to effect an immediate escape suggests the dread of a future in Germany, and emigration resulted.⁷⁵

The effect of these conditions in Germany brought an ever-increasing emigration, taking shape in the early fifties and reaching its height in 1854 with 215,000.⁷⁶ It was especially in these years that the credit of the small farmers cracked under financial strain. Many had been involved in mortgages before 1845 for improvements; many had incurred debts to save themselves in 1845 to 1847; and annual payments were expected after 1848 to free themselves from feudal obligation. It thus became the habit in the early fifties to sell land at any price and take the rest of the farmer's family to the American West.⁷⁷

It was also during the early fifties that political reaction became a great factor. Carl Wittke, the most outstanding authority on the Forty-eighter, claims that the multiplication of evidence indicates that political reaction was a more important factor in explaining German emigration than has been appreciated. The prohibition of German-language papers' circulation and other repressive actions convinced many that political progress was impossible. The records

⁷⁵Hansen, op. cit., p. 274.

⁷⁶"Statistical Review," op. cit., p. 25.

⁷⁷Hansen, op. cit., p. 286.

of Darmstadt show that 116 soldiers deserted between May and October 1852 and emigrated to America, and sailors from the fleet did the same thing.⁷⁸

The failure of the Wurttemberg vintage from 1850 to 1853 discouraged many, and at the same period the American railroads were opening vast Western territories and made appeals to prospective immigrants. New states, such as Wisconsin, were making extraordinary efforts to attract new immigrants, and improvements in ocean travel made the journey shorter, cheaper, and safer.⁷⁹ Numbers of immigrants came from Schleswig and Holstein where soldiers from the Three Years War saw no future. In Mecklenburg, the natural redistribution of population was prevented by 'local monopolies' control of all trades and by medieval laws of settlement. At this time, family assistance from immigrants who came before began to take its toll. In Pomerania a few districts witnessed an outpouring, and in Hanover and Oldenburg, the conditions of the grain farmers accelerated a current already running strong.⁸⁰

But by 1855 the flow of emigration dropped sharply to only 13 of its 1854 strength.⁸¹

Germany provided an answer to the decrease in immigration, for at this time she was busied with building railroads, fighting wars, and

⁷⁸Wittke, Refugees of Revolution, p. 50.

⁷⁹Faust, op. cit., pp. 585-86.

⁸⁰Hansen, op. cit., p. 293.

⁸¹"Statistical Review," op. cit., p. 25.

changing from sail to steam. In addition, the settlement societies, which had organized and propagandised so effectively earlier, began to die out.⁸²

The voices of Germans in America served as no stimulus to depart. The last wave of Germans, non-assimilated in American society, wrote much literature criticizing the new country and urging Germans to stay at home.⁸³ Karl Buchele reported in 1855, "These people (who emigrate) after successive disappointments, discouraging experiences, and hard losses, become convinced that what they have gained is a very slight recompense for what they have sacrificed."⁸⁴ The Nativist movement in America discouraged those already in the country and carried over in the decisions of would-be emigrants in Germany. The coming of the Civil War was not without its impact on thinking.⁸⁵

Another significant wave followed the American Civil War, when in 1866 one hundred fifteen thousand poured in, and the rate remained high until the peak of 149,700 was reached in 1873.⁸⁶ In Germany this

⁸²Hawgood, op. cit., p. 63.

⁸³Wittke, We who Built America, p. 195.

⁸⁴Karl Buchele, Land und Volk der Vereinigten Staaten von Nord Amerika. Stuttgart, 1855, published in Historical Aspects of the Immigration Problem; Select Documents, Edith Abbott, tr. and ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1926, p. 145.

⁸⁵Hawgood, op. cit., p. 63.

⁸⁶"Statistical Review," op. cit., pp. 29-31.

period corresponds to the great wars of Prussia, and to the convulsions into which the German states were thrown before their being united in one nation. Military duty and hard pressure upon the population was a stimulus to exodus.⁸⁷ In America, the enactment of the homestead law in 1862, granting one hundred and sixty acres of public land practically free on condition of settlement and cultivation was an enormous inducement to the land-hungry German having a difficult time.⁸⁸ Also European confidence had been reaffirmed in the United States after winning the Civil War.⁸⁹

But the immigration statistics after the Panic of 1873 show its affect on German thinking that was not so predisposed to leave his now unified land as in 1837. In the following six years the immigration only reached fifty thousand in one year, and that was in 1874.⁹⁰

A bound upward began in 1880, in which year the immigration from Germany was three times as large as that of 1879. It doubled nearly again in 1881. But 1882 was the banner year with 250,600. This record is comparable to a pulse indicating the material prosperity of the two countries.⁹¹ Germany's increased population was not immediately absorbed by the industrial development.⁹² America remained

⁸⁷Faust, op. cit., p. 586.

⁸⁸Stephenson, op. cit., p. 51.

⁸⁹Hawgood, op. cit., p. 63.

⁹⁰"Statistical Review," op. cit., pp. 32-33.

⁹¹Faust, op. cit., p. 586.

⁹²Hawgood, op. cit., p. 63.

an attraction for the German farmer and artisan during this time of her great industrial expansion. A comparison of wages and hours of work demonstrates the reason. A comparison of agricultural conditions provides an even more decisive reason, for the farmer experiences a shortage of labor, increasing cost of production, and a decline in prices from 1880 to 1889.⁹³

In the latter part of the 1880s, Germany's rise as an industrial nation began to correspond to her ability to handle her surplus population in her colonies in Africa and elsewhere. By the early 1890s, America failed to provide the necessary pull to offset new German circumstances. The frontier had ceased to be the important force that it once was, the era of free lands was drawing to a close, and the drift into the cities and factory centers was in progress.⁹⁴ And the German saw the competition of the American labor market flooded with Slavic and South Italian races, whose standard of living they considered inferior.⁹⁵

The final factor that produced the sharp drop was the Panic of 1893. By the time the American nation had climbed to its feet, the tide of Germans had exhausted itself.⁹⁶ Another factor to be considered was the government and the press of Germany which looked with disfavor

⁹³Stephenson, op. cit., p. 52.

⁹⁴Wittke, We Who Built America, p. 210.

⁹⁵Faust, op. cit., p. 587.

⁹⁶Ross, op. cit., p. 48.

upon emigration to the United States, though it did not actually prevent it. Thus the force of German emigration had exhausted itself. The situation at home had passed through an evolutionary and revolutionary stage, expelling its discontents at various stages, and a new land had been in the stage of development which provided attractions and reward. But this era had come to an end.

There were many characteristics that the German as an immigrant displayed. Perhaps the most famous characterization of the distinctions among German immigrants is that of Friedrich Muench,⁹⁷ a participant in the "Dreisigiger" emigration. Muench claimed that, for a period of emigration from approximately 1815-1870, three distinct types can be discerned. The first group were laborers and peasants, accustomed to hard work and thus emigrated to Missouri and other Western states, where they could engage in agriculture. The second group were those who rebelled against the backwoods condition, and only a few became farmers. Most of these went to the cities as merchants, manufacturers, or "brain-workers" of various kinds, often into journalism. Muench depicts a clash between the two groups, and is responsible for the nicknames since applied to them of "die Grauen" for the older set and "die Grunen" for the younger.⁹⁸ The grays had passed through twenty years experience of American frontier conditions and lost many

⁹⁷Friedrich Muench, "Die Drei Perioden der neueren deutschen Auswanderung nach Nordamerika," Der Deutsche Pionier, October, 1869, V. I., pp. 243-50.

⁹⁸The former are the "grays," and the latter, the "greens."

of their impractical ideas.

The third immigration came after the Civil War. Here a distinct difference can be noted, for they were mostly of the working class. In comparison with the earlier immigration, they were overbearing, dissatisfied with conditions, and too impressed with what they left behind. Not desiring to do the work of an inferior class, they often found all desirable positions filled.

This characterization has proved most helpful and useful for an evaluation of the German type. Faust substantiates its accuracy.⁹⁹ While most of the earlier immigrants were farmers, laborers and artisans tended to predominate later,¹⁰⁰ giving many principal cities of the United States very large population.¹⁰¹ But even earlier, the German movement to cities was often a natural outgrowth of their spread along the Erie Canal. After arrival in the U. S. many immigrants remained in New York state, until by the end of the 1850's, the German population of New York City was estimated at 100,000. In 1831, Germans began to go to Buffalo in large numbers, forming a powerful German element there.¹⁰² Around 1830 enough Germans had moved into New Orleans that a "Deutsche Gesellschaft" was formed to protect them.¹⁰³

⁹⁹Faust, op. cit., p. 590.

¹⁰⁰Hawgood, op. cit., p. xiii.

¹⁰¹Faust, op. cit., p. 578.

¹⁰²Wittke, We Who Built America, p. 198.

¹⁰³Faust, op. cit., p. 578.

By 1913 the strength of German immigration could be seen in Milwaukee where nearly half the people were of German parentage, in Cincinnati, where they constitute a quarter of the population, and in St. Louis where the element is one fifth. Only a third of the Germans were distributed in 1913 in rural districts.¹⁰⁴ Even in the Wisconsin immigration, it was Milwaukee that became the Mecca of the German.¹⁰⁵ By the 1880s and 1890s the city Germans became the more prevalent, for it had become a natural tendency to congregate in the large cities, and to go to those states and communities already possessing a large German population.¹⁰⁶

Another characteristic of the German migration was its tendency to occur in family groups, probably because there was a strong tradition of family life among the Germans.¹⁰⁷ Only after 1900 did single persons come in large proportions.¹⁰⁸

Although German settlements tended to draw "Landesleute" to them, and effect the immigration of others to join them, it is generally true that those parts of the United States which received Germans in large numbers, received them from all parts of Germany.¹⁰⁹ For example,

¹⁰⁴Ross, op. cit., p. 49.

¹⁰⁵Hawgood, op. cit., p. 77.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., p. 78.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., p. 44.

¹⁰⁸Stephenson, op. cit., p. 43.

¹⁰⁹Hawgood, op. cit., p. 75.

of the five hundred and four founding members of the German "Pioneer Verein" of Cincinnati, a society formed in 1868, one hundred and seven stemmed from Hanover, ninety seven from the Bavarian Palatinate, sixty seven from the rest of Bavaria, fifty eight from Baden, fifty from Prussia, thirty seven from Oldenburg, thirty six from Wurttemberg, twenty six from Hessen-Darmstadt, eighteen from Alsace-Lorraine, and eight from German Switzerland.¹¹⁰

The German, as an immigrant, brought traits that were not so objectionable as those of the "new" immigration, for the German was noted for his high degree of education, his orderliness and thrift, discipline and obedience to authority, and cultural and aesthetic sensibilities.¹¹¹

He was also not a financial liability. The Immigrant Commission at New York concluded that each immigrant from 1845 to 1854 represented a total financial and economic asset to the United States of \$500. The German Society of New York estimated the average capital of the German immigrant who came in 1853 at \$61.18.¹¹² Friedrich Kapp, a Forty-eighter who became a member of the Immigration Commission of New York, calculated the German immigration from 1819 to 1871 at

¹¹⁰See Der Deutsche Pionier, list beginning at end of Vol. I, p. 135. Pratt Fairchild, Immigrant Backgrounds. New York: Wiley and Sons, 1927, pp. 42-58.

¹¹¹Kuno Francke, "The Germans," in Fairchild, op. cit., pp. 42-58.

¹¹²Wittke, Refugees of a Revolution, p. 43.

2,358,709, and estimated that this represented an actual importation of money to the amount of half a billion dollars and a potential productive capacity of over one and three quarter billion dollars.¹¹³

Viewing the German as a settler in the United States, there are several leading characteristics peculiar to him. He was not by inclination or choice a frontiersman or pioneer. He sought a familiar environment, migrating from forest to forest. He sought land and a place where he could take his family, and he tended to preserve his German economic technique and methods.¹¹⁴

That the land-hungry German farmer sought land can be demonstrated when one follows the "German belt" of the 19th century, which area corresponds to the most productive and progressive in the United States. It was that area from the northern boundary of Massachusetts and Maryland, spreading westward north of the Ohio River to the Great Lakes and into the trans-Mississippi states.¹¹⁵ This trait set the German aside from the Yankee, for land was only a desirable commodity, not a sacred trust. In the earlier immigrations, the Germans were unique among the foreign elements for this trait.¹¹⁶

¹¹³Wittke, we who Built America, p. 187.

¹¹⁴Hawgood, op. cit., p. 33.

¹¹⁵Faust, op. cit., p. 581.

¹¹⁶Hawgood, op. cit., p. 33.

The German, coming before 1866 mostly from south and southwestern Germany's dense forests, naturally sought the wooded or forested land in America. In their yearning for a familiar environment, they flocked to the more heavily wooded districts, which required less capital.¹¹⁷ An example is Wisconsin, where the Germans are massed in the section of the state that corresponds with the heavily wooded districts and near the main routes of travel. From here they have spread into deeper forests.¹¹⁸

One characteristic that has often been attributed to the German is his position on the frontier. Faust asserts that one "will find the German element on the frontier line at every stage of its progress westward, securing and defending it, or pushing it onward."¹¹⁹ But a closer examination indicates that that German is found behind, rather than on the frontier. Hawgood summarizes his investigation by concluding, "he was rarely, in the strict sense of the word, a pioneer."¹²⁰ The German settlers compelled to criticize Gottfried Duden, whose writings had encouraged many Germans to seek the middle western frontier.¹²¹ The German was also lacking in the characteristics that a frontiersman should have. He brought his family, located near main travelled routes, was cautious in refusing to speculate, and remained settled where he usually was already located.

¹¹⁷Ibid., pp. 27-29.

¹¹⁸Levi, "How Wisconsin Came By. .," op. cit., p. 313.

¹¹⁹Faust, op. cit., p. 434.

¹²⁰Hawgood, op. cit., p. 22.

¹²¹Joseph Schafer, Wisconsin Homestead Book. Madison: Wisconsin Society, 1922.

An examination of the German in Wisconsin reveals also the same tendency to remain behind the frontier. A county by county¹²² study shows that the pioneers before 1848 were native Americans, that the German immigration, beginning after 1847, brought a pioneer that allowed others to pave the way. Ohio illustrates the same point. Ohio became a state in 1803, and yet the influx of Germans into Ohio came later than 1820.¹²³ Cincinnati had a population of over 16,000 in 1816, and yet "the Germans were poorly represented."¹²⁴ By 1830, the Germans are estimated to have constituted only 5% of the Cincinnati population.¹²⁵

An examination of the Forty-eighter reveals the same trait. He was affected by the most important trend in American history, the westward movement, but yet did not clear woods and build loghouses. Rather they sought opportunities and were drawn to the cities.¹²⁶

The "Old Lutheran" immigrant alone might fall into the frontiersman class, and yet even they sent agents and leaders, and went as a body.¹²⁷ The settlements on the Texas frontier in the 40's were also an unusual circumstance. The settlement was handled by a society

¹²²Schafer, op. cit., pp. 50-51.

¹²³Hawgood, op. cit., p. 25.

¹²⁴Mench, op. cit., p. 244.

¹²⁵Hawgood, op. cit., p. 25.

¹²⁶Johnson, in The Forty-Eighters, p. 51.

¹²⁷Hawgood, op. cit., p. 26.

which surveyed the land and prepared for the immigrants, and at least led them to believe arrangements were to be completed by their arrival.¹²⁸

Non-assimilation was a trait that the German seemed to possess, and this was because he became the source of such antagonism and reaction by the American. The German immigrants, especially after 1848, struggled hard to remain unassimilated and to prevent their children from assimilating. Inter-marriage with native-born Americans or with other people was quite rare among the Germans of the middle west. An example can be found in Milwaukee, where in 1850 out of a population of 6000 Germans and 4000 native born Americans, only six of the Germans were married to non-Germans.¹²⁹ The Germans were militant in their struggle to ward off Americanization. In 1837, thirty-nine German leaders assembled at Pittsburgh to discuss ways and means to preserve the German language and its press in America, to demand equal status for the German language with English, and to foster a university modeled after the German one and a normal school for the training of teachers of German.¹³⁰ The arrival of the Forty-eighter was a setback for German assimilation, for the liberals cried that the earlier Germans had not remained German enough nor had they asserted their influence sufficiently.¹³¹ The intention of many of the

¹²⁸Ibid., p. 25.

¹²⁹Ibid., pp. 37-38.

¹³⁰Wittke, Refugees of a Revolution, p. 14.

¹³¹Muench, op. cit., p. 243.

Forty-eighters to return to Germany later when Germany was ripe for revolution did not help to settle the Germans for American life. German military companies and revolutionary societies were founded.¹³² The strong tradition of family life was probably a cause for the Germans to link closer to one another. And circumstances were often unfavorable, for in the 1850's the "Know Nothing" movement forced the Germans more closely together to face the attack, and lessened their will to cooperate in American life.¹³³ Also the clash between the "Greens" and "Greys" was recoiled over the slavery issue and a solid German front was brought into existence. The arrival of the Germans during the Bismarkian era brought in a group that was more pro-German than any of the preceding groups,¹³⁴ and the reading of letters written home by them indicates the distinct flavor of German unity.

The theme of the first German era, lasting from 1815-55, was the idea of founding a new Germany, or transplanting German civilization to a region where it could develop unhampered. This was especially tried in the 30s, 40s, and 50s in Missouri, Illinois, Texas, and Wisconsin, and involved settlement societies.¹³⁵ But the motive to establish a bilingual state, a new Germany, was present only in the minds of the leaders, for the bulk of the settlers cared or knew little about it.¹³⁶

¹³²Witte, We Who Built America, p. 194.

¹³³Hawgood, op. cit., p. xiv.

¹³⁴Wrench, op. cit., pp. 343-47.

¹³⁵Hawgood, op. cit., pp. xv-xvi.

¹³⁶Stephenson, op. cit., p. 46.

CHAPTER II

THE PROCESS OF IMMIGRATION

Franz Locher, an historian contemporary with the mid-nineteenth century emigration, estimated in 1847 that an average of 40,000 refugees left to come to America yearly between 1830 and 1845 in order to improve their pitiful condition resulting from poverty.¹ George Blasl wrote home from America in 1838 that he had seen, on his way out of Germany the wagons of so many other emigrants, eager because they had heard that there was an Immigration Society in America that would find them a new home.² The America fever can perhaps best be visualized when one tries to imagine the sight Franz Locher describes--in one spring day of 1832 seven trains with 700 emigrants from around Stuttgart alone passed Koblenz, while from Heilbronn on the same day 1000 men left for America.³

Studies of the time indicate that tribute, class taxes, lack of money and the narrow realm of possibilities to earn money drove many away,⁴ but the individual stories of typical immigrants explain even further the initial situation which ended in emigration.

¹ Franz Locher, Geschichte und Zustände der Deutschen in Amerika. Cincinnati: Eggers u. Hunkeler, 1847, p. 233.

² Karl Fischer, "Hamburger Handwerker wandern nach Amerika aus," Pfäzler Heimat, (article found in library of Heimat Stelle Pfäzle, p. 103.

³ Locher, op. cit., p. 271.

⁴ Otto Bruns, "Auswanderung aus dem Kreise Saas," Wittlicher Tageblatt, February 2, 1959.

The letters of Jacob Maig to his brother Georg in Koblenz from 1832-1837 are an important source for understanding the desperate conditions that decided him and others on a course of changing environments. The first letter reflects the working conditions in the hat factory where Jacob was employed, where a depression had hit after high hopes of a new market in silk hats. The number of town poor increased tremendously, and food became too expensive to buy. The town yearbooks revealed further the problems that were multiplying: "In no year have the field thieves been so active. The drinking bout has increased as well as the indulgence in many other excesses. The children's school absences were never so large and the youth are not at all obedient." The report points out that basic poverty, into which the town was increasingly falling along with the increase in population, was the cause.⁵ Then the cholera broke out and spread. Charity attempted to alleviate the situation by providing portions of nourishing soup, but this could not alter the course of things. The police and the Commission of the Poor tried to find work for the healthy, but the coming of cold winters made the outlook even more hopeless.⁶

It was to this desperate economic plight that a political⁷ significance was added, as Jacob Maig wrote his son George from jail.

⁵Fischer, op. cit., p. 101.

⁶Ibid., p. 102.

⁷Ibid., letter written May 25, 1834.

Arrested because of his participation in the Hambacher Fest,⁸ he found that the political scene was the occasion for changing environments. In 1837 a letter from America⁹ explained the political situation as the immediate cause of his departure: "I am sorry that our fatherland is under the omen of blood. If that were not the case, then America would now be behind me. . . . If you should remain at home, then you can count on my seeing you once again." George took a dim view of business opportunities and, as in the case of many emigrations, followed Jacob over the seas.

The story of Jacob Schramm illustrates emigration as a form of rebellion against a parental command not to marry the girl of one's choice. But even after the parents had consented and the initial incentive for leaving was removed, it was too late to stop the process, for as a contemporary saw it: "All his thoughts and strivings were already directed toward America; and more than this, the purchase (of land) there had already been made, consequently the enterprise had been carried to a point where he could not well abandon the idea."¹⁰

A diary from the 1840s shows another family leaving because the father had made political enemies, but then there was also the consideration that three of his sons were almost of age for compulsory military service.¹¹

⁸The Hambacher Fest was an assemblage of students and citizens in May, 1832, for speeches about liberty and reform and the tyranny of petty princes. The incident led to arrests and more rigorous censorship.

⁹Letter from New York, January 21. Printed in Fischer's article.

¹⁰"The Schramm Letters," trans. Emma S. Vonnegut, Indiana Historical Society Publications. Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1935, p. 228.

¹¹Leonard Koester, "Early Cincinnati and the Turner's," Bulletin of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio (January, 1949), V. 7, p. 18.

The lack of restrictions on leaving was another factor that allowed the emigration to swell. The American Germans,¹² complained that whole villages were being abandoned, which should be of great embarrassment to the German governments because a large number of skilled and educated citizens were leaving.

Attempts to regulate emigration were superficial. In many a case officials hastened to aid the process, thinking themselves to be rid of another headache. It was not that states were without a code regarding emigration, which each German state and principality had, but rather that the failure to enforce what codes did exist led to a nullification of them. No European country adopted an official policy toward emigration until the latter part of the 19th century.¹³

At various times governments became alarmed at the extent of emigration, as in 1825, when its frightening proportions renewed memories of the drain of 1817-19. But even then the measures taken by the governments of Baden and Hessen to make emigration more difficult had little effect.¹⁴ In Bavaria, from 1844 to 1851, 45,300 persons emigrated with official permission, but 31,592 went without it.¹⁵ This demonstrates the ineffectiveness of restrictive action. When a government sought to hinder emigration, as Prussia did

¹²Volksblatt, August 5, 1847.

¹³Hansen, op. cit., p. 12.

¹⁴Locher, op. cit., p. 253.

¹⁵Population of the United States in 1860. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1864, p. xxiii.

in the 1840s, it was usually through imposing restrictions,¹⁶ which were never very effective through the first three quarters of the 19th century.

The nearest thing to a measure controlling the population movement came from the United States in 1819, when Congress enacted the first federal statute dealing with immigration. This law resulted from a realization of the unsafe and unsanitary conditions of transportation. It was the gruesome stories told by German immigrants that evoked sympathy to enact a statute putting an end to such deplorable conditions. The law forbade any transatlantic ship entering an American port to carry more than two persons for every five tons of registry. From then on, customs officers were required to record the number of passengers in such vessels.¹⁷

Once difficulties in transatlantic transportation began to be dealt with, and as the age of steam was ushered in, emigration received an impetus. Another barrier was overcome when the sentiment binding the villager to his native soil and the ignorance of what lay beyond an immediate village began to change.¹⁸ A concept of America, discussed more fully in the next chapter, was developing and the media multiplied through which this concept was spread.

Plans were made by groups, agents, and other individuals to

¹⁶Volksblatt, July 8, 1847.

¹⁷William J. Brownell, History of Immigration to the United States, New York: Redfield, 1856, p. 16.

¹⁸Hansen, op. cit., p. 3.

perpetuate emigration and to get rich from growing exodus. Letters and news from America were instigated. Immigration pamphlets, literature, and newspapers went from hand to hand. Immigration societies sprang up inside and outside Germany and agents joined together in glowing business operations. Franz Locher observed these operations and criticized the German government for failing to check emigration except through weak restrictions that meant nothing.¹⁹

Although books over America were very popular and one can find advertisements for them in almost any old German newspaper,²⁰ special American or Emigrant newspapers or magazines failed, except Kolumbus and Amerikanische Magazin.²¹

Whatever letters, newspapers, and books relating to America were owned or received in Germany were shared with almost a whole community. One means by which this occurred was the reading club. The sponsor was generally a local minister who steered the discussion away from religious topics; in the weekly meetings in the parish schoolroom chapters of some chosen work were read and then opinions were exchanged. Since history and travel formed the bulk of the material, America tended to be the center of interest. Some such sessions were held with the deliberate purpose of reading about America with emigration in view.²²

¹⁹Locher, op. cit., pp. 270-71.

²⁰A good sample of this can be seen in the Anzeige Blatt der Kreis Hauptstadt for August 4, 1849.

²¹Franz Eckhart, Das Amerika buhd der deutschen Revolution von 1848-49. Heidelberg: University Press, 1958, p. 38.

²²Hansen, op. cit., p. 149.

Various other willing sources provided Germans with information to shape their knowledge of America and to direct them to one special area in America or to bring them through a special agency or company.

Many states in the United States formed special bureaus to attract immigrants. Propaganda was then distributed to possible emigrants and to immigrants at ports. Wisconsin was one of the ambitious ones with its many books, some written supposedly by Germans who came to Wisconsin and advised their friends and neighbors to come too. Thus Carl Haas condemns other colonies and in extra large print tells his "friends" that Wisconsin is an especially good place for them.²³

Groups in America circulated statistics in Germany which told where Germans had settled in America and encouraged emigrants to head for these areas in the Mississippi Valley.²⁴

Private sources in America made Germans acquainted with information they desired to disperse. Thus Cincinnati Editor Charles Cist forwarded a great number of copies of his publication, Cincinnati in 1841 to foreign friends. His own evaluation of its effect upon emigration led him to claim that "from time to time since, I have been in receipt of gratifying evidence, that the transmission of a publication like this, giving full and various information respecting the advantages presented at Cincinnati to emigrants, has answered many

²³Carl de Haas, Nordamerika, Wisconsin, Winke fuer Auswanderer, Elberfeld: Baedeker, 1848, p. 2.

²⁴Never Despair. New York: Scofield and Voerhies, 1837, pp. 40-41.

valuable purposes" such as making Cincinnati better known among German emigrants than any other place in the United States.²⁵

The effect of such literature can be measured in other ways. Franz Locher saw a book inviting settlers to Louisiana as the cause for Hupp and his followers' decision to go there. Then they further heard from merchants in Holland about the land and constitution there, and this decided them upon the trip.²⁶

But information also trickled back from America which could halt the flow of people. Thus the panic of 1819 slowed the emigration, but only after letters from Germans in America reached the homeland and after refugees from the disaster began to arrive.²⁷

Letters from America were recognized as immediate stimuli to emigration. Haas admitted that American letters were so quickly read and digested that he would share his by publishing them.²⁸ Less commercial attempts came from diaries. John Jungmann stressed the pull of letters in his journal: "There had been a great emigration from Germany to America, which had been encouraged by letters received from the emigrants."²⁹ The letters of a Jewish family from Germany in 1817 were singled out as the medium which drew this religiously oppressed group to America.³⁰

²⁵Charles Cist, The Cincinnati Miscellany. Cincinnati: Robinson and Jones, 1846, I, p. 119.

²⁶Locher, op. cit., pp. 259-60.

²⁷Hansen, op. cit., p. 103

²⁸Haas, op. cit., p. 4.

²⁹Cist, Cincinnati Miscellany, II, p. 178.

³⁰"Cincinnati, eine Historische Skizze," Cincinnati Turnfest-Fuehrer. Cincinnati: Burghelm Publishing Co., 1889, p. 70.

Yet the role of letters should not be overstressed, for they represented only a form of communication whereby information was transmitted among persons afflicted by the same difficulties or a channel of contact among relatives who sought to join one another again.

Actually letters by immigrants are hard to find today partly because the exchanges were frequently not continued. Newcomers in America were saving, and pennies were rare. Studies and collections of family letters indicate that the exchange was greatest at the beginning, dwindling continually until toward the end only very special circumstances were communicated. Two letters by Daniel Leonard illustrate this. In 1886 he wrote: "It was unfortunately over a year ago that I received a letter from you which I should have answered long ago." Again, in 1888, he wrote home thanking his correspondent for a letter written a year before.³¹

The majority of letters portrayed the truth about America as seen through the immigrant's eyes. The families in America were eager that their relatives not be disappointed if they should decide to come.³² For instance, Esig wrote at first that he could earn as much in America in two days as he formerly could in eight days in Germany, he also later wrote about his setbacks and problems in the hat business making it clear that there was no success without work in America.³³

³¹ "Nicht immer war es die Pfälzische Wanderlust," Pfäelzer Feierabend, March 17, 1957.

³² Ibid.

³³ Fischer, op. cit., p. 105.

However, there were undoubtedly many false letters which were specifically designed to stimulate a greater emigration. Enig wrote home from America that he found many people who had come to America because of "lying letters," which would falsely build up expectations. Although one eats white rather than black bread in America, he reported, the cost of living is also higher which such letters do not indicate.³⁴

The German archives also yield information regarding false letters from America. A letter found in the Ludwigsburg archives in May 1817 was written to the Royal office asking for an investigation of a letter from America "luring these people to America with enticing descriptions." The accusation went on to explain that false letters of this type were being written by a Dutch "soul seller" group who had familiarized themselves with the family conditions necessary to perpetuate the hoax. The writer claimed to have definite proof, but asked that the investigation remain secret.³⁵

Corroboratory information is as impossible to obtain now just as it was then. The state government's investigation was superficial, and nothing was accomplished. The investigation consisted of a report from the Oberamt stating that no information was found except that a local citizen had four sons in America from whom he received letters.³⁶

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Letter of May 1817 found in Ludwigsburg archive.

³⁶Report of May 1817 from Ludwigsburg archive.

The Royal Ministry of the Interior reported that they had also found no information except from the man with four sons. Thus the officials concluded that the man with the four sons had occasioned the report.³⁷

Newspapers carried letters in columns advertising for particular travel agencies. The newspaper for the area around Speyer illustrates this. In October 1852 a letter appeared written supposedly by one who had emigrated and was pleased with a particular agency. He felt compelled to recommend it because "I believe that I can best serve my relatives through this deed."³⁸

In November the Wolff agency ran other letters. On November 4 a group supposedly wrote a letter communicating their satisfaction, and on November 16 three-fourths of a page was devoted to an advertisement for Wolff, much of the page taken up by a letter signed by twenty-seven local citizens who praised Wolff as their only friend in their tribulation of emigration.³⁹

Newspapers served a greater function in communicating information and stirring up an America fever through news columns than through advertisements. Spectacular news of opportunities in America were transmitted in an often fairy-like tale. The gold rush in America is one example of this. On February 21, 1849 the Anzeige Blatt ran a full page on California, appealing to Germans largely because of a

³⁷May 14, 1817.

³⁸Anzeige Blatt, October 12, 1852.

³⁹From Anzeige Blatt.

letter supposedly written from Monterey in November. The letter glowingly tells of whole regiments running away to seek gold and of captains abandoning their ships. Workers were earning \$3000 a year and many had got ten ounces of gold a day for three weeks. But the writer claimed that to prevent exaggeration he must add that the workers would not likely make yearly between 150,000,000 and 450,000,000 Thaler!

The Anzeige Blatt reported February 24 that 50 ships were headed for California, and made the prediction that "This discovery will mean a new beginning and advances in industry, trade, and ship travel for the entire world," and Germans were credited with participation in the gold rush.

But perhaps the greatest temptation to leave for this new haven of opportunity came from the letters which were printed in the Anzeige Blatt, such as from the young American to his friend in New York in October. "I have seen a man who in one place not larger than 50 feet got \$65,000 of gold in 6 days." His advice to his New York friend was to come to California, bring whisky, cotton, clothes, and earn \$75,000. He stressed that now was the time to make this decision because the next centuries would never again produce such opportunity!⁴⁰

Emigration became a big business, and many hurried to participate in the yield. Agents' advertisements began to flow freely as soon as the weather warranted trans-Atlantic travel. A check of newspapers from 1848-52 reveals wide appeals to the departing beginning in April

⁴⁰Anzeige Blatt, February 24.

and becoming most noticeable in July and August, and tapering by September and November. Attempts to bring the America-born to a particular travel agency included, in addition to letters supposedly from other immigrants, claims that prices were lower, promises of guaranteeing safety, offering special prices for family groups, and trying to gain confidence by telling about the ship or captain.

One particular angle was the taking advantage of the known trickeries involving immigrants. Firms would post bulletins condemning certain practices, leaving the suggestion that their firm abhorred and abstained from such money-making devices as selling passages on full ships.⁴¹

One emigrant to America worked as an agent for a travel agency in LeHavre before setting sail. In his letters to his brothers in Germany he described some of the methods employed to bring customers. In order to secure passengers he would send articles to German newspapers which would paint a good picture of American life. He said that another method was to warn the immigrants against the brokers and then picture themselves as the protectors of the immigrant. Thus a German family with little money came to him and asked his advice. He then realized how ignorant most of them were of procedures in immigration and how cheated the customers had been. So he made arrangements for them directly with the ship owner and then left for America himself.⁴²

⁴¹Many such samples can be found in the archives at Ludwigsburg and Speyer.

⁴²Edgar Suess, "Das Schicksal des Wilhelm Senn aus Bochenheim," Das Hambacher Fest, May 23, 1957.

Another group which appealed to the German to emigrate and to buy their product was the railroads. The activities of the Illinois Central was outstanding in its results. It began its attempt to colonize Germans on salable railroad lands by publishing a circular which called attention to the large number of Germans already residing in Illinois and gave the terms of purchase. Pamphlets and maps were distributed in immigrant ports. Advertisements were inserted in the German language newspapers, and land was sold by a German house on a commission basis. Arrangements were made with the publishers of two leading newspapers in Germany, and such information was published in the newspapers. An editor was sent on a three-week tour at the expense of the railroad, after which time he prepared a pamphlet, which was distributed in about 2000 copies by ships' captains and agents.⁴³

The most pretentious effort sponsored by the Illinois Central was the instigation of a book, Reisen im Nordwesten der Vereinigten Staaten (1857). Its three editions and an English translation brought reports of favorable conversations with German immigrants and information on Illinois to the emigrant.⁴⁴

But these efforts were not enough to sell the lands before Illinois could demand a forced sale. Thus President Osborn decided to go even further in his appeal to foreign immigrants.

Arrangements were made with ministers and others who were making a trip to Europe and might have influence among their people. The

⁴³ Paul Wallace Gates, The Illinois Central Railroad and Its Colonization Work. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1934, pp. 198-99.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 199.

most outstanding German in Illinois, Lieutenant Governor Francis Hoffman, was solicited to help sell the lands, and he advertised in the German newspapers, employed agents and runners to work with Germans in port areas, and distributed large quantities of pamphlets and circulars. In the Allgemeine Auswanderungs Zeitung he ran an article entitled "For everyone without a home, now a homestead!" In four years he was instrumental in selling and settling over 80,000 acres representing small sales to actual settlers.⁴⁵

An example of an individual stirring up emigration can be seen in the example of Franz Joseph Stallo who incited his fellow countrymen not to pay the taxes. Because of this and the songs, articles, and pamphlets which he was distributing, he came into conflict with the government. His association with Bremen as an immigration agent caused him to agitate further for immigration. He became friends with a ship captain through whom he made contacts in America. He corresponded and distributed this correspondence among the farmers in the area. A song was sent to Stallo by one of the Americans, and this found a widespread reception among the peasants. The Deutsche Pionier reprinted the lengthy America-song because of its "contribution to the immigration history in stirring up great numbers of young people in the early 30s to emigrate from the Oldenburger and Osnabrueck area."⁴⁶

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 200-03.

⁴⁶"Zwei Agitatoren der Auswanderung," Deutsche Pionier, March, 1875, p. 6.

His efforts, continued from America, stimulated a very great emigration, especially in 1832 from Danne, Hunteburg, Osnabrueck, and surroundings.⁴⁷

One form that emigration took in the first half of the nineteenth century was the settlement society. Although most of the group migration occurred before the thirties, some of the most significant group migrations came afterwards.

Franz Locher described how a settlement society operated. It would find participants easily, for the movement had already stirred up another immigration from which they could draw. The leaders would have only to give away pamphlets about the United States and the journey there which would discredit unfavorable reports and leave a good impression.⁴⁸ Still this did not dispel all the fears which held people back. Thus George Rapp went before his religious followers to Philadelphia where he made arrangements for their support.⁴⁹ This was the pattern with most societies, and sometimes with individuals--someone would be sent before to pave the way and make arrangements, although the group often found that very inadequate arrangements had been made.

The group migration idea took a new turn in the thirties and forties when the concept of building a new Germany began to obsess patriotic Germans. Many claimed that the government had the responsibility of

⁴⁷Henry A. Ford and Mrs. Kate B. Ford, History of Cincinnati. Cincinnati: Williams Company, 1881, p. 143.

⁴⁸Locher, op. cit., p. 257.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 260.

organizing or subsidizing the emigration, as will be further developed in the next chapter, but the realization that no government bounty could be secured did not end the attempts.

One early attempt in 1819 was made by Ferdinand Ernst of Hanover, who settled at his own expense twenty or thirty families near Vandalia, Illinois.⁵⁰

Two idealists became successors to this idea, and under the auspices of the "Giessener Gesellschaft" they planned to build a new Germany in a part of the American West which had not yet been admitted as a state. The political developments in Germany in 1833 seemed to paint a pessimistic picture for the future.⁵¹ A plan of action was developed by Paul Follen and Friedrich Muench, who concluded that "we must not go without realizing a national idea. . . the foundation of a new and free Germany in the great North American Republic shall be laid by us."⁵² They settled near Ruden's farm and helped make the present Warren County Missouri the center of the most widespread settlement of Germans west of the Mississippi.⁵³

Other groups that experimented with a new Germany were the Adelsverein, with its colonization in Texas⁵⁴ and Old Lutheran

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 257

⁵¹ Hansen, op. cit., p. 124.

⁵² Faust, op. cit., p. 442.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 444.

⁵⁴ Hargood, op. cit., p. 141.

communities in Wisconsin.⁵⁵ The Volksblatt⁵⁶ reported a group of 75 leaving LeHavre on their way to the Red River in the famous colony "Icarus." These groups were apparently not spontaneous, but the result of years of work and planning. The Volksblatt tells of another group which, after ten years of work, at last boarded a ship for Texas from Mecklenburg. They had organized a treasury and the rules and regulations to govern their community.⁵⁷

How such societies functioned can be determined from records in the German archives. The German government had no official control in the plans of such societies, but nonetheless freely gave advice as a report of the Palatine Royal Ministry of the Interior for April 19, 1847⁵⁸ demonstrates. A society from Ulm had been formed for the purpose of emigration to America, and the government was examining their documents. The procedure the society planned included the sending of a deputation ahead to prepare the way. This would be followed by a number of pioneers, farmers, and tradesmen, who would set up the community for the entire group. Then approximately 200 persons would follow. Money would be obtained by sale of stocks at 100 francs, a share, and each stockholder would receive 30 acres of land.

The reaction of the ministry to the society is interesting, because it demonstrates the aristocratic bureaucratic outlook as well as the lack

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 204.

⁵⁶April 13, 1848.

⁵⁷October 21, 1847.

⁵⁸Original in Ludwigsburg archive.

of actual control in emigration. The Ministry's report agreed that emigration would be in the interest of the participants, but that it should be handled by someone capable. It was not the responsibility of the state to organize the emigration, yet the ministry felt that the group planning the venture were not of the sort to "guarantee for the success of the undertaking and to be sure to carry out the undertaking. " The leaders and organizers were tradesmen "to whom you cannot accredit the necessary intellectual ability for such an enterprise and it is indicative enough that the chairman of the Verein, a barber, was selected chairman. He was the man who a few years earlier occupied himself with the problem of an airship manned by a human being, and whose request for state support we already rejected in 1845."

Because there was no hope for the success of the project, the ministry suggested that "under these circumstances the requested permission of the state, which the society does not need anyhow," be denied and that they not be allowed to function, publish invitations, or solicit people.

Another form that emigration took, particularly in the early nineteenth century was the payment for passage by a "redemption" agreement. Although these persons were sold by ship captains to anyone who would buy their services for a stated time, in return for paying their passage, it made possible the opportunity for a new life for many. Some were fortunate enough to come into contact with men such as Martin Baum of Cincinnati, who counseled them in their problems and gave them

employment after securing them in Baltimore and Philadelphia.⁵⁹

The selling of people became a business, as in 1819 when redemptioner brokers saw the easy absorption of the previous season's immigrants and then actively spread the news of American prosperity and enrolled servants on the spring ships.⁶⁰

Two letters to a German government written from America January 2, 1819 reveal an attempt to agitate an emigration of indentured servants, and the desperate lot suffered by some of those who undertook it. One of the letters is an introduction to the second. Sent from Philadelphia it requests immediate attention, for "I am imploring for my freedom."⁶¹

The informative letter explains that a German from Philadelphia, Mannhardt, was coming to Wuertenburg to encourage possible emigrants to be sold. He was to deliver these, according to his agreement with Philadelphia merchants, to Amsterdam where ships would await their delivery. They had judged that 800-1000 passengers could be loaded on these and would bring them much money. The writer begged His Majesty to prevent these plans, "for this is nothing but soul selling." The writer offered, under summons, to give more information, but asked to be protected, for "these people are capable of murdering one secretly."

⁵⁹ Stanley Matthew, "Aftermath of a Golden Jubilee," Bulletin of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio, XVI, April, 1938, p. 228.

⁶⁰ Hansen, op. cit., p. 103.

⁶¹ Found in Ludwigsburg archives.

But the main concern, apparently reflecting the writer's own circumstance, was that "those who cannot pay their own freight meet with misfortune because they will be sold and spend the rest of their lives as slaves."

Again a superficial investigation by the Ministry of the Interior followed. One report⁶² expressed the opinion that Mannhardt did not participate in such a stimulation of emigration. It continued that the Illinger Gesellschaft, with which Mannhardt's name had been linked, had no connection with him except that he wrote a letter for a friend to inquire about American ships in port and conveyed the information that passage could be secured for 175 francs. And the final proof alleged was that Mannhardt could not have stimulated emigration because, as with his friend, there was a desire to emigrate before Mannhardt had helped him.

A second report⁶³ concluded that Mannhardt had only advised a group of several hundred people (led by Mannhardt's friend discussed in the previous report) by telling them about passage and suggesting that they go to Philadelphia, where he could care for them.

The reports failed to take into consideration that these would probably be the activities of such a soul-seller, rather than proof why he was not associated with that business. The best prospects would

⁶² May 24, 1919, Ludwigsburg Archive.

⁶³ May 22, 1919.

be those who had already decided to emigrate but had been hindered, especially because of financial reasons. And the participation of a native German as leader, with whom the agent could make contacts, would have been ideal. No attempt was made to determine whether any financial arrangements were made at the port of departure, nor were prospective immigrants questioned.

Another report exonerated Mannhardt⁶⁴ because he himself said he had come to visit his old mother, and that he was aware of "human handlers" in Amsterdam. In fact, he said that he had made efforts to stop this trade, and had helped a number of the victims himself after their arrival in Philadelphia. (He might have meant he bought them himself!) He had been visited by many persons from his own neighborhood and from neighboring villages who were desirous of leaving, but "again and again he demonstrated his religious behavior." This report concluded by suggesting that "no Wuertemberger official could be persuaded to commit such an illegal act."

Still another report⁶⁵ attempted to show Mannhardt's innocence, because the official had spoken with him and heard him lament that so many emigration-enthusiasts had come to him. "He told much about the unhappy plight of those who couldn't pay their voyage. . . and added that the fate of some poor Germans had led German merchants in Philadelphia to equip a few ships which would transport these immigrants from Amsterdam to America" at the charge of 174 francs. The

⁶⁴April 24, 1819.

⁶⁵No date. Filed as no. 12.

official summarized his finding: "Either he must be a great imposter or I must be mistaken in my judgment," for here was a man who was a member of many religious societies.

At any rate, redemptioner brokers operated especially at this time and even later, in the 1840s. The governments in 1848 were warning their subjects by public announcement to be careful not to fall into the hands of "soul sellers."⁶⁶

In the beginning of the century, most of the German emigration was on Dutch ships and through Dutch ports. In the 1830s and 1840s South Germans were drawn mainly to LeHavre, while Eastern and Northern Germans were leaving through Bremen. The German Society of New York concluded that in 1846 most Germans arrived in New York City from the following ports respectively: Havre, Bremen, Antwerp, London, Hamburg, Rotterdam, Liverpool, Amsterdam, Stettin, Hull, and Ghent. Bremen itself yielded one third of the arrivals.⁶⁷ By 1852 it was estimated that still only one third of the Germans were arriving through German ports.⁶⁸

One of the changes in port of departure that was most noticed was the increase via London, which was described as "tremendous" in 1847, and the prediction was that it would further flow by way of London.⁶⁹ And the emigration through the German port of Bremen would be coming increasingly through Canada to the United States.⁷⁰ Lord Elgin,

⁶⁶Volksblatt, July 8, 1848.

⁶⁷Locher, op. cit., pp. 254, 271-73.

⁶⁸Statistical View of the United States; Compendium of the Seventh Census. Washington: Senate Publisher, 1854, p. 122.

⁶⁹Volksblatt, July 8, 1847.

⁷⁰Volksblatt, July 11, 1847.

Governor General of Canada, estimated that the number of emigrants via the St. Lawrence who proceeded directly to the United States was approximately 5,000 a year in the early 1850s.⁷¹

Most of the immigration which went via Bremen to Baltimore remained there to build a large German segment.⁷² The population of most other port cities was more transient. Philadelphia and Baltimore received larger numbers of Germans in the 1820s than later in the century.⁷³ In 1820 the major ports of landing were New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, New Orleans, Boston, and Charleston.⁷⁴ Between 1836 and 1846 those Germans leaving Bremen were headed mainly for New York, Baltimore, New Orleans, Philadelphia, Charleston, Galveston, and Quebec.⁷⁵ By 1860, major ports of landing were New York, New Orleans, Boston, Baltimore, San Francisco, and then Philadelphia.⁷⁶

As the numbers who were going to America increased in the mid-nineteenth century, it was apparent that the conditions of travel were inadequate and dangerous. The problems of the travelers ranged from lack of money or space to getting cheated, from simple seasickness to many deaths from cholera.

⁷¹Compendium of the Seventh Census, op. cit., p. 125.

⁷²"Das Deutschtum Baltimore's," Deutsche Pionier, June, 1871, III, pp. 106-08.

⁷³Locher, op. cit., p. 255.

⁷⁴Population in 1860, p. xxiii.

⁷⁵Locher, op. cit., p. 272.

⁷⁶Population in 1860, p. xxiii.

Passengers usually had to wait in a port two or three weeks before they could secure passage on a ship in the heavy seasons. By then many had run out of money and had to find other ways to pay for passage. One was fortunate enough to be successfully smuggled aboard by friends, and his pretense at being a blind passenger kept him from being discovered.⁷⁷ A Buekkirchen newspaper reported in 1846 that 127 of that city's emigrant families were suffering terrible privations while waiting for a chance to leave. The women and children were begging in the streets and using trash for food.⁷⁸

Glessen group had to be split because a ship failed to be prepared for them, with the result that those behind wasted their savings, became dissatisfied, and led to disorganization of this segment of the group.⁷⁹

When a ship was there, passengers would board days ahead of time and sleep on their suitcases on the decks. Then immediately before departure they would go ashore and buy meat and fresh bread for the trip, because each passenger had to supply his own food. The police inspectors, the emigrants claimed, were less severe with passports than with food inspection.⁸⁰ One immigrant wrote his cousin a description of his trip⁸¹ from Worms to New York.

⁷⁷Fischer, op. cit., p. 104.

⁷⁸Otto Brunn, op. cit.,

⁷⁹Hansen, op. cit., p. 125.

⁸⁰C. W. Fennel, "Der Tod Fuhr mit in Zwischendeck," Pfalzer Feierabend, January 13, 1955.

⁸¹Letter from Jacob Risser, May 31, 1845. Original in Heimatstolle Pfalz.

From Worms the boat trip was normal with an extraordinary number boarding at Duesseldorf. The ship was full from there to Rotterdam. But this was nothing compared to what happened there. The trip was horrible, for the room on the deck was so small that not a fourth of the people were accommodated. Others wrote descriptions of 81 day trips, with dangerous weather and horrible hunger, and told of having seen as many as four ships stranded with many perishing in 1836.⁸²

The story aboard the Charlemagne, communicated to relatives in Germany, should have frightened the "America-eager," as the Germans called them. An hour after leaving LeHavre most passengers became sea-sick. Others were so drunk that they could not stand up. Most could not eat or drink anything for 8 days. Women screamed much of the time, bewailing the fact they had ever left. Two children died, then a woman, then two more children. There were no doctors aboard, so the barber had to serve as one. The captain had very little medicine. As others died and the bodies were thrown overboard, the people asked themselves, "How will this all end?" But still others died. Finally they spotted land at the Gulf of Mexico and those remaining held a dance to celebrate.⁸³

Improper conditions led to much of the abuse, despite contracts to the contrary which were usually signed. Of the 500 Germans who were passengers on the Winfield Scott, 40 died and many were sick upon

⁸²Fischer, op. cit.

⁸³Fennel, op. cit.

arrival because of lack of normal health standards.⁸⁴

Failure to carry out contracts was a frequent abuse. Winds delayed the departure of 200 Germans who had signed a contract with an agent covering the whole period through their arrival. Yet they were made to pay extra, despite protests from their consuls.⁸⁵

Other reports carry less violent portrayal of painful trips. Gottfried Duden, whose book probably influenced German concepts of America more than any other, said he could not recommend the ships, but the greatest evils he discussed related to the boring ship life and the fact that passengers had to handle their own bedding.⁸⁶

Those who had made the trip usually cautioned their loved ones at home who anticipated following. Heinrich Hammer wrote from Chillicothe on April 5, 1853, "If our parents would like for you to make the trip to America, then you must be courageous. Have hope and patience, for these are the virtues that will make you happy, healthy, and satisfied by the time of your arrival here. Do not despair, but go with firm seriousness of purpose toward the goal."⁸⁷

Others were imposed upon in other ways. The case of August,⁸⁸ considered a typical emigrant experience of a fictitious person,

⁸⁴Volksblatt, May 24, 1849.

⁸⁵"Zur Leidensgeschichte der Deutschen Auswanderung," Deutsche Pionier, II, June 1879, p. 89.

⁸⁶Gottfried Duden, Bericht ueber eine Reise nach den westlichen Staaten Nordamerikas, St. Gallen, 1832, pp. 6, 8, 12.

⁸⁷Friedrich Volk, "Kleinkarlbacher wanderte nach Amerika aus," Die Rheinpfalz, August 20, 1956.

⁸⁸Never Despair, op. cit., p. 12.

demonstrated how German merchants sailing on the vessels with their prospective customers, would take their money to be kept by the captain, with whom they could not speak because of the language barrier. They would never see the money again.

Germans were often sold passages for inland transportation in America while they were still in Germany or on board ship. There were many things that were often wrong. Usually the price was raised, especially from Milwaukee to Buffalo. Finally the German societies in America began to organize against this abuse.⁸⁹ Thus such organizations as the Deutscher Volks Verein were called into existence to help remedy such abuses.⁹⁰

Many passages purchased in Germany were found worthless by the immigrants. This problem was recognized as a severe one by the governments of German principalities. A report found in Ludwigsburg archive⁹¹ occasioned by letters of complaint by a German official to his superiors, illustrates the abuses and the concern over them. The official found that many Germans, against the advice of experts, were buying tickets for travel within the United States, many of which were worthless. Perhaps the immigrant felt he should make the arrangements in Germany, where the language was no barrier and where he thought himself less likely to be cheated. But the result was the same, and

⁸⁹ Volksblatt, September 2, 1847.

⁹⁰ "Deutscher Volks Verein," Fliegende Blaetter, February 13, 1847.

⁹¹ February 19, 1853.

it was illogical to purchase a ticket when he did not know when and on what ship he would be going or whether he would arrive at all.

The report treated unfavorably, however, the suggestion that the state regulate this practice. The official declared it against the spirit of the constitution to control this affair. Besides that, there was an amazing amount of competition among transportation bureaus, which no means could ever stop. The corruption and fraud which were widespread could not be discovered until too late. Above all, it "would harm the prosperity of the city. A monopoly of any kind must not be allowed. The police leave much to be desired."

Others had risen against such evils. The Forty-Eighters lent their pens to the effort of guiding immigrants to the best localities and of protecting them from exploitation. Some translated official immigration pamphlets to make sure correct information was conveyed. Others started a magazine, Atlantische Studien, where factual and concise reports were made to offset a too pessimistic view that had come from the many evils.⁹² A permanent commission was also organized for the relief and protection of alien immigrants arriving at the port of New York.

In Germany, an organization was effected. In Frankfurt am Main a National Verein under the auspices of the governments of Wurtemberg, Baden, and Hessen was set up in order to help with immigration.⁹³ This group

⁹²Johnson in The Forty-Eighters, p. 75.

⁹³Volksblatt, April 29, 1847.

became more aroused to the necessity of action by 1849. A meeting was held in Heidelberg in April of all organizations and the respective government officers.⁹⁴ This group had previously discussed the possibility of sending a commission to America, and drew up rules to be agreed upon by all branches.⁹⁵ But the character of the organization was never such that it was able to act with a free hand regarding emigration. This was clear by 1851, after a meeting in which it was agreed that the agency should be limited to advising and protecting immigrants.⁹⁶ But one must wonder how effective the service could have been, for agents were to give advice free of charge, and agents had not yet been established in foreign ports where most emigrants would probably need the most advice.

The group also ran into other difficulties. They were constantly seeking qualified people, meaning the "rank of state officials, propertied nobility, and higher merchant class." A large deficit had been incurred in pursuing a colonization plan, and the organization was hoping that the Treasury would assume the deficit in order to encourage the devoted members!⁹⁷

Landing in America was considered by all as an important and exciting moment. Almost all letters home to Germany gave vivid

⁹⁴See report, March 23, 1849 in Ludwigsburg archive.

⁹⁵March 10, 1849 report, Ludwigsburg.

⁹⁶Report from July 24, 1851.

⁹⁷June 3, 1851 report.

descriptions of joy and relief at sighting at last the destined shores. But comparisons often were made and one had to admit such shortcomings as "there are no roads and things like at home."⁹⁸

From the time of arrival a place of final destination was sought. Most arrived in New York and other ports with the intention of moving on to the American West, for the two most important concerns which a German had were purchasing the best lands at the cheapest rate and picking a sight where the greatest number of their countrymen were living together.⁹⁹ Many groups knew how to appeal to these desires, and the Kansas Pacific and Santa Fe began making known the advantages of their lands and induced Germans to come for them.¹⁰⁰ The many emigrant guides also used land as one of the most important attractions.¹⁰¹

Others headed to certain areas because of friends and family already there. Thus Heinrich Ratterman came to Cincinnati, where a relative had preceded him and where "many Germans from the northern plains had gone to this great German center of the Midwest in the years preceding and the Ratterman family was not friendless."¹⁰²

⁹⁸Letter by Katharina Rissler to her mother and sister October 16, 1832 from Lancaster Pennsylvania. Found in Heimatstelle Pfaelz, Kaiserslautern.

⁹⁹Never Despair, p. 40.

¹⁰⁰Gates, op. cit., p. 309.

¹⁰¹See Emigrant's Guide Through the Western States. Buffalo: Steele and Faxon, 1832, p. 75.

¹⁰²Mary Edmund Spanheimer, "Heinrich Armin Ratterman, German-American Author, Poet, and Historian, 1832-1923," The Catholic University of America Studies in German. Washington: Catholic University Press, 1937, IX, p. 14.

Another procedure in immigration was that of Germans heading West stopping to stay with fellow countrymen en route. The Germans particularly seemed to feel it their responsibility to help fellow-countrymen, as they themselves had usually been helped. It was customary for an immigrant to write his emigrating relatives the names and places of Germans along their route where they would be well received and taken care of.¹⁰³

Other letters reveal the warmth and friendliness with which the newcomers were received. Some stayed as long as three weeks with one relative before moving on to another. Usually the arrivals were quite impressed, and reported that they had been received with love and care. But the life in America made the greatest impressions: "I can't remember ever having been in a house where things were like here, the floor covered with the most proper rugs. I must say, it looked princely."¹⁰⁴

Upon arrival in New York an immigrant who had no friends or family there often himself was well received if he had letters of introduction which assured him of such help. Thus Jacob Schramm had help in finding lodging, making arrangements for shipping his trunks, and going through customs, all from different persons.¹⁰⁵ Yet this was not always the

¹⁰³Volk, op. cit.

¹⁰⁴Letter of Katharina Risser to her mother, October 16, 1832.

¹⁰⁵"The Schramm Letters," op. cit., p. 242.

case. The Immigrant Society reported that many were excluded from the influential families of Germans, for some immigrants had neglected to obtain letters of recommendation.¹⁰⁶

There was much advice about how to conduct trips from the port of arrival to the place of destination. Some letters were explicit to the point of telling the arrival where to make transportation arrangements, which German guesthouses to visit underway, which railroad to travel on, and how much money to use. Other letters complained that German landlords had only small houses which were not the best places, and therefore should be avoided.¹⁰⁷

In general, Germans prided themselves on giving aid to their fellow Germans. This ranged from aiding the revolution in Germany to taking in immigrants and finding jobs for them. As Daniel Hertle wrote a young friend in Germany after 6 years in America as a newspaper editor, "I flatter myself that I have done my honorable part in creating places for our German countrymen in this country, with its difficulties in getting into business."¹⁰⁸

Another contact that American Germans maintained with their homeland came in asking for things to be sent them from time to time.

¹⁰⁶ Never Despair, p. 18.

¹⁰⁷ "The Schramm Letters," op. cit., pp. 143 and 249.

¹⁰⁸ "Ein Pfälzer in Amerika," Pfälzer Feiertag, November 23, 1957.

Letters asked for such things as roots for grape vines,¹⁰⁹ or different sizes of saw blades, because "I cannot get these things here."¹¹⁰ Another letter¹¹¹ asks for a piano, a new kind that Americans heard were being made, even if it cost \$100. Also a copy of Klopstock's Messias should be sent. Another letter asks for relatives to buy coats, which were cheaper than in America. These were then to be smuggled in.¹¹²

Many immigrants held out hope that they someday would return to Germany, most for a visit, and some to stay. Usually those who wanted to return permanently changed their minds, although periods of extreme difficulty in America sometimes led to their turning back. But usually the contact with Germany was maintained by letters or by the development of German communities in America. Beyond this a hope was often entertained that someday the beloved friends, relatives, and old sights could be revisited.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹Letter from 1853 printed in Die Rheinpfalz, August 21, 1956.

¹¹⁰Letter from 1855 in Die Rheinpfalz, August 21, 1956.

¹¹¹Jacob Risser to Johann Risser, March 13, 1845, found in Heimatstelle Pfalz.

¹¹²Fischer, op. cit.

¹¹³Letter March 16, 1875 from Johann Risser, Heimatstelle Pfalz has original.

CHAPTER III

CREATION OF A CONCEPT OF AMERICA

As Germany in the 19th century failed to provide its people with the necessities of life, America became the image of fulfillment to Germans who either were poverty-stricken or were searching for greater opportunity. America came also to represent virgin soil upon which the frustrated hopes of European democratic strivings could be realized. Upon this new continent could perhaps be achieved such concrete dreams as that of a New Germany.

The various forces working upon the German to effect emigration produced an awareness of his circumstance on the part of the emigrant, and resulted in various contemporary attempts at explanation. Franz Loehner, a university graduate in law with a special concentration in history, has been singled out by his own and later generations of Germans as the first German-American historian.¹ His Geschichte und Zustände der Deutschen in Amerika was published in Cincinnati in 1847 as well as in Germany in 1854 and was influential in portraying a concept of America, as well as attempting to explain the early and mid-nineteenth century immigration movement.

Franz Loehner divided the German emigration to America into two eras, one from 1815 to 1830, and the other from 1830 to 1845. The

¹Franz Loehner, der Pionier deutsch-amerikanischer Geschichtsschreibung," Deutsche Pionier, July, 1871, III, p. 147.

first group left the fatherland because of poverty or oppression, with the educated seeking political satisfaction or adventure.² But after 1830 a new era began, for the farmers, manual laborers, and others who were single participants in the movement were transformed into a grouping of emigrants who recognized the opportunity to build up a distinctly German life in the American West. So now a spirit began to grow which directed the conscious thinking of the potential emigrant.³ Locher maintains that there were many oppressive circumstances driving them from their homeland. The religious spirit sought freer expression and at the same time the state held more tenaciously to a church-state relationship. Also, the revolutionary attempts to free the spirit failed, frustrating especially the younger Germans. Emigration to America was not always the first solution, for they first sought to continue the battle in countries adjacent to Germany until they finally came to doubt whether the conditions could be immediately altered. Then they fled to America.

But why to America? Locher determined that the concept of America was of a nation "which more than any other land corresponded to their political convictions," for it offered freedom, as well as a chance to earn a rich standard of living.⁴

But as is true of the whole process of immigration, the example of the early emigrants tended to perpetuate the immigration of others.

²Locher, op. cit., p. 252.

³Ibid., p. 269.

⁴Ibid., p. 270.

Thus Locher claimed that their example awoke many other dissatisfied countrymen and adventurous Germans to follow their footsteps. But it was not that America could or should have been the only place for them. Rather, their flight to America represented the best compromise for them in view of the fact that Germany itself offered no colonies, for "the emigration would have gone there, but now the Western fields of the United States with its freedom would gain them."⁵

Thus Locher viewed the immigration as resulting from a mixture of economic, political, and religious motives, and as a self-perpetuating movement to a land where according to the image of America, the German ideal could be most fully realized in absence of actual German colonies.

Contemporary sources other than that of the first German-American historian reveal the interplay of motives in emigration.

Most students of these motives found the economic impetus to be the most vital. Economic freedom made an even greater appeal than political freedom, for the whole American continent lay open to the newcomer who was then free to move at will and carry on business unhindered by restrictions and regulations. The German newspapers made this quite clear in their reportings of America. The Allgemeine Zeitung as well as German magazines such as the Hannoverisches Magazine stressed this freedom and the rights and privileges which the German would be tendered. The farmer would be considered of the highest rank, with artisans next, and the officeholders last.⁶

⁵Ibid., p. 270.

⁶Hansen, op. cit., p. 160.

Franz Locher assessed the economic cause as the greater stimulus for exodus. He described the unceasing poverty after the Napoleonic wars, which resulted in the collapse of businesses as the population grew, and the rich taking them over. The place of the plebeian became more narrow, and those who had once had position were now without it.⁷ Thus people were in search of a promise of greater opportunity.

A study of the emigration from the Pfalz led Otto Drumm to conclude that it was not adventure, but economic necessity, dissatisfaction, and sheer industry which lay behind a decision to emigrate. In addition to letters, the Alsenbruecker church book for 1838 revealed the reason for departure, for within the previous five-year period of bad weather ten per cent of the population abandoned the town, especially immediately after a bad siege.⁸

Obviously the Americans and Germans working for them recognized the economic factor as the main attraction for immigration, the one upon which railway companies, ship captains, and travel agents capitalised. By 1870 the various railroads had used sundry methods to attract the German immigrant by stressing the value of their farming lands.⁹ For example, advertisements of the Illinois Central

⁷Locher, op. cit., p. 250.

⁸"Nicht Immer war es die Pfälzische Wanderlust," op. cit.

⁹Ernest Bruncken, "Germans in America," Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1898. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1899, p. 349.

offered good wages and constant employment on the railroads in 1853, with cheap land along the railroad to be bought.¹⁰ Foreign ship captains around 1825 recruited passengers by spreading reports of American projects for canals and turnpikes and the need for laborers. These methods resulted in such an influx of passengers who were unable to pay for their passage, much to the dissatisfaction of ship captains. Thus the captains returned from America in 1828 with pessimistic reports of opportunities for work and thereby reduced the number of passengers.¹¹

The Emigrant Friends' Society, in its book Never Despair, designed to typify the problems of immigrants, illustrated the typical motive for emigration. The hypothetical case was August who "left Germany because he hoped that by selling his little property there, he might be enabled to purchase in Western America highly productive lands, at so cheap a rate that he might secure to himself an independence, which he could not hope to attain in Europe."

Another group which recognized the basic economic motive as the main factor in emigration were the German-Americans who spoke through the press. A reading of German-American newspapers reveals the constant contempt the intellectual held for his fellow German who emigrated not for greater opportunity, but for sheer escape from economic responsibility. Thus the Volksblatt, July 22, 1847, warns that "America is only partly a paradise and no one who has immigrated would hold it up as possessing

¹⁰Gates, op. cit., insert between pp. 96-7.

¹¹Hansen, op. cit., pp. 120-21.

all happiness, a place where one can without work in his sleep become rich. . . . Many have an idea of America that remains only an idea, since they make no attempt to realize this dream. The new land is just like the old."

But the political motive was closely associated with the movement of immigration, for there was another pressure upon the individual which tended to oppress him and force a flight from a distasteful situation. Although the actual number of political refugees was less than the influence they exerted and the attention they have received, perhaps the political factor was more closely integrated with economic discontent than has been realized. A study of the census records in the National Archives in Washington reveals that approximately nine out of ten German immigrants between 1848 and 1854 came from the area west of the Elbe River, which was the region of revolutionary events and the one where political factors were stronger than elsewhere.¹²

Religious reasons also contributed to a decision to emigrate. It is impossible to measure how greatly the knowledge of religious freedom in America affected the emigrant. Individual segments of the population would be more likely affected than the total, for religion did not mean everything to the German, although it did mean something.¹³ The pietistic movement was an isolated factor, not affecting the general

¹²Johnson in The Forty-Eighters, op. cit., p. 46.

¹³Hansen, op. cit., p. 161.

fate of the German element. The old Lutherans were more influential in continuing the process of immigration but then their attraction to America can not be viewed as purely religious, for they were influenced by their land hunger and saw the West offering them an abundance.¹⁴ No appreciable number of Catholics came to the United States because of religious oppression.¹⁵ Then there was the absence of religious sentiment in the political refugee, who usually prided himself on being a free thinker, if not an atheist, one to whom America offered a hope of relief, for she was a land of many churches with a firm insistence on separation of church and state.¹⁶

The total image a German emigrant had of his own circumstances must include a composite of all factors, united perhaps in his concept of a greater freedom to be found elsewhere. This image can best be illustrated through contemporary newspaper accounts. The Nuremberg Freisinnige and the Neckar Zeitung, among others, dispersed the news of American prosperity wherein the citizen was relatively free from the heavy tax burdens a European suffered, for there no percentage was deducted as tithes for the clergy or as rates for the poor. Though the United States had about the same population as Prussia, the standing army of the latter was fifty times as large. And it was amazing that

¹⁴Bruncken, op. cit., p. 348.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 348-49.

¹⁶Friedrich in The Forty-Fighters, op. cit., pp. 20-21.

a farm that kept eight horses paid a tax in America of only twelve dollars. The contemporary literature, as will be more fully discussed later in this chapter, stressed the religious freedom and political freedom which was offered in America.

Josef Mergen, who has written an eight volume work studying the emigration from the Trier territory, entitled "Die Amerika-Auswanderung aus dem Regierungs-bezirk Trier," claims in his volume on the emigration from the county of Daun that the greatest draw toward immigration was the desire for personal freedom, which superseded any sheer economic, political, or religious consideration. An example can perhaps be found in an examination of the claim of the Land Office of Daun for 1852, which reported that the basic cause of emigration lay in the poor economic conditions, with political considerations not playing an important role. However, Mergen points out in his study that some left to escape military service. But more important is an examination of the property of those who did leave. Most were industrious, well-propertied citizens with sound and healthy families. From 1841 to 1846, 1,663 persons left with belongings of 171,730 Thaler, and one family had 7,200 Thaler by itself. Mergen demonstrates the same representation of wealthy among those emigrating for the year 1843 alone and for 1851-60.¹⁷

Thus a desire for personal improvement brought the attractions of America more closely home in the popular opinion of the time, for the

¹⁷See review in the Wittlicher Tageblatt for February 2, 1959.

peasant and artisan had long been swept by a longing for personal improvement, which is reflected in editorials of many newspapers of the time. Among them, the Stuttgart Morgenblatt and the Ausburger Allgemeine saw America as heir to this progressive revolutionary impulse, as a hope of fulfilling the ambitions of those striving to better themselves.

The question is still not so simple as to be answered merely by the consideration of economic, political, or religious factors and their relationship to a concept of freedom and opportunity. Intellectual forces had resulted in creating a concept of liberty, democracy, and national unity toward which Germany had developed a rich and varied tradition. She had produced a great literature, philosophical, historical, and poetical, which captured the imagination and idealism of the German. A setting for national rebirth had been created by Kant, Fichte, Herder, Schelling and Hegel in philosophy and by Moser, Niebuhr, and Savigny in history as well as by Lessing, Goethe, Schiller, and Noelderlin in poetry. The romantic sentiment portrayed in Seume's poem of the noble savage who did not know the "varnished politeness" of old Europe reverberated in the hearts of Germans with a romantic penchant. Stories of the American wilderness heightened the sense of adventure and worked upon the romantic interpretation of freedom as solitude, independence, and uniqueness.¹⁸

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 9-14.

Goethe added to the concept of America and served to develop the cosmopolitan spirit whose roots were nourished by the ideals of liberty and democracy. So America became the symbol of the new life, as exhibited in Goethe's famous line, "Amerika, du hast es besser," reiterating the vista in the search for a good life.¹⁹ The American frontier and the Middle West was only a continuation of the influence of Goethe, for there was a deep link between the final views of Goethe's Faust and the outlook of the settlers in America, for "Faust becomes the settler, the frontiersman on a vast ocean of savagery, he becomes the American, transforming a wild continent into the habitable abode of rational men."²⁰

The freeing of a faith in humanity from narrow nationalism instilled a belief in the universality of man's calling, as expressed in Goethe's "Hymn to Joy," which exemplifies the spirit of the German intellectuals and which also corresponds to that spirit of the revolution of 1775 which led to the founding of America.²¹

The practical effect of this cosmopolitan spirit was probably in its making the transition from Germany to America a more logical and natural one. Friedrich, in studying the process by which Carl Schurz became an American, claims that Schurz "was an American before he ever set foot on the soil of the United States," for America too was

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 11.

²⁰ Denton J. Snider, quoted by Friedrich in The Forty-Eighters, op. cit., p. 12.

²¹ Friedrich in The Forty-Eighters, op. cit., p. 18.

cosmopolitan in its outlook. Its leading spirit, as revealed in Emerson and Thoreau, was the same as that in Germany.²²

When individual immigrations are studied, various personal considerations seem to play as great a role as social and intellectual forces. Jacob Schraam reported in his letters that he left Germany for America because he decided to marry a poor girl against the wishes of his angry father. Thus, as a friend who published his letters in 1837 claimed, he "entertained the thought of buying property in the United States on the strength of several thousand thaler which he had saved, of marrying the girl of his choice against his father's wishes, of leaving Germany, and of realizing under America's sky his hopes of domestic happiness and self-respecting independence."²³

There are also many cases of those who seemed to have been caught up in the general fervor of immigration and who were intrigued by sheer "wanderlust." Biographies of a number of emigrants reveal this.²⁴ But the process of immigration itself can be determined as an influence on further emigrations, for a study of German immigrant letters reveals the tendency of those in Germany to follow their relatives in America, especially from the early to the middle nineteenth century. Thus the letters from America contain invitations, arrangements for boarding with friends and relatives along the way and sometimes prepaid passage.²⁵

²²Ibid., p. 16.

²³"The Schraam Letter," op. cit., p. 228.

²⁴For example, see articles in Deutsche Pionier, III, for April, 1871.

²⁵A reading of the hundreds of letters collected by Dr. Fritz Braun in the Heimatstelle Pfalz in Kaiserslautern reveals this.

An immigrant in Cincinnati claimed in an autobiography in the Volksblatt,²⁶ that his neighbors and friends left, and being one of the last, he too finally decided to depart.

Another Cincinnati, Karl Ruselin, is an example of the complexity of motives. He had a desire to emigrate to America, which was increased when in 1832 a large emigration from Wurtemberg took place. This emigration was effected also by Gottfried Duden's letters in his book. Finally permission from his father allowed him to seek after Jacksonian democracy with which he was entranced.²⁷

The various books, pamphlets, travel literature, and letters from friends and relatives served as sources in the development of a concept of America. The books which became best known and helped influence popular opinion tended to view America favorably, finding in her the fulfillment of what Germany failed to offer.

Thus Franz Locher asserted that it would be a misfortune if Germans were to go anywhere but to America, for Germany was incapable of improvement, but in America the Germans would find not only friends and relatives,²⁸ but also the opposite situation from that in Germany. In America the living standard and freedom were as complete as any that a powerful nation should possess, and more than that offered by England. Thus the cry developed "To America, to America," and this

²⁶ June 8, 1848.

²⁷ Ford, op. cit., p. 130.

²⁸ Locher, op. cit., p. 273.

reverberated through all German lands.²⁹ In 1846 Locher saw the German leaving in great numbers because in Germany there was no clear prospect of winning freedom.³⁰

One of the most powerful images of America was created through the work of Gottfried Duden's Bericht ueber eine Reise. It was his letters on American life and comments designed to inform his fellow-Germans that were instrumental in bringing unusually large numbers of Germans, especially from well-to-do and educated classes.³¹ The great demand for knowledge of America led him to visit the New World to record his own impressions. After three years of residence on a farm in Missouri, he returned to Germany in 1829 and published in a periodical a series of letters describing his experience. Marcus Hansen evaluates these as "the most important piece of literature in the history of German emigration."³² The appeal of the work lay in its informal nature and its handling everyday life.

Duden declared that he was prompted to this work by observing the unfortunate outcome of many emigration attempts. Thus he assumes the responsibility of acquainting his fellows with the truth. The truth, to the many Germans who wanted to believe it, was that America was an advantageous place in which to live. He mingled fact and fiction,

²⁹ Ibid., p. 254.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 253.

³¹ Bruncken, op. cit., p. 352.

³² Hansen, op. cit., p. 149.

interwove experience and imagination, set the freedom of the forest and of democratic institutions in contrast to the social restrictions and political embarrassments of Europe.

As a result of the work, innumerable resolutions were made to cross the ocean and build homes in Missouri. At first a large number of farmers and laborers from Westphalia and Hanover came, followed by people of a higher social class--counts, barons, scholars, preachers, gentlemen-farmers, merchants and students.³³

The influence of the work can be evaluated also in terms other than the known increase in immigration to Missouri. The book was, after first appearance, reprinted in 1500 copies, and then reprinted again a few years later. In total over 5000 copies were distributed, resulting in this work having the largest circulation of its time.³⁴ To demonstrate its effect upon immigration one need only note that the second edition was published by the St. Gallen Immigration Society in Switzerland and distributed at cost.³⁵ And one must also bear in mind that the actual circulation of this work was many times greater than the number of copies, for books were lent and discussed all over Germany.

Duden reflected the German desire to learn more about and to acquire land in America. Thus he minimized the political consideration

³³Faust, op. cit., p. 441.

³⁴Franz, op. cit., pp. 32 and 36.

³⁵Ibid., p. 37.

that other writers had not fully discussed, by claiming that the favorable political condition of America was founded more in the fortune of outside circumstance than in the result of inner forces of her inhabitants. His chief concern became to tell the settler where and how he could buy land at the most advantageous price.³⁶

There can be no doubt that Duden more than aroused enthusiasm when he pictured America as the fulfillment of German aspirations in such utterances as: "How often I have thought on the people of Germany. How the abundance and prosperity would spread to whole families through the labor of a few," an advantage which the American could not appreciate since he was born here.³⁷

Another German, Frederick Von Raumer, presented the same picture of fulfillment in his book, translated into English and popular in America as America and the American People. He claimed the advantages of America to be fruitful soil, easy tillage, high wages, pleasant climate, good markets, not to mention the "blessings of inestimable value"—liberty, the rights and security of a citizen, the high esteem of a republic, unbounded religious freedom, freedom from military service, and more. The only desire in America was "to raise corn, to eat bread, and to make money."³⁸

³⁶Duden, op. cit., p. 1.

³⁷Ibid., p. 219.

³⁸Frederick von Raumer, America and the American People. New York: Langley and Astor House, 1846, p. 150.

The promise of unrestricted freedom that America held in the mind of the German was reflected partly in the number of experiments which were undertaken on American soil. The democratic flavor which beckoned from America attracted those who by governmental persecution had been singled out as radicals, but who were not hindered by restrictive legislation on emigration. To them America was the ideal haven of every kind of experimental idea, for America had its Fruitlands, New Hope, and other Utopian communities.³⁹

Not only extremes in democratic opportunity, but also a promise of future greatness were extended to the potential immigrant. Loehner pointed out that the thirty years prior to 1947 brought forth an America that commanded a place in world history. The Americans "taking advantage of their special character and nature, began a rise such as history has not yet known." The answer, opposing the conclusion of Duden, could be found in the American people themselves, for Loehner pictured the capacity for freedom and happiness which penetrated the people so that the spiritual life reached such vitality as to stun the Old World.⁴⁰

In his Europa und Amerika, Schidt-Phiseldick had found the same thing, "the initiation of a new period of history" stemming from the American revolution, bringing to life a "spirit of freedom." According

³⁹Friedrich in Zucker, ed., The Forty-Eighters, p. 15.

⁴⁰Loehner, op. cit., pp. 235-36.

to this work (1820), which circulated in more than 1,000 copies, a "new state" with no traditional rights and privileges existed in America. America was recommended as a model for democracy, and the hope was held out that perhaps her example would bring free representation to the monarchies.⁴¹

Others did not hold out hope for the transmigration of the democratic concept. Eduard Widenmann with his "Die nordamerikanische Revolution und ihre Folgen" (1826) presented also a positive picture of America, finding her creating a remarkable sensation, but warned against an attempt to transport her principles to Europe.⁴²

Michael Lips in his Statistik von Amerika (1828) praised America for the "deep quiet and peace" which prevailed there while Europeans quarreled among themselves. He concluded that America had a great love of country and spoke of other nations "without hate, jealousy or slander." But the marvelous system of freedom, embodied in the American constitution could not be transplanted to Europe.⁴³

What would then be the answer to the European search for freedom? Others readily gave the initial step as emigration. Gottfried Duden reiterated many times the potential in America of fulfilling the spiritual power and strivings of Germans, who met with no hope in European worn institutions.⁴⁴

⁴¹Franz, op. cit., p. 6.

⁴²Ibid., p. 7.

⁴³Ibid., pp. 10-11.

⁴⁴Duden, op. cit., pp. x and 232.

America represented to most authors a political success that Duden was not willing to admit. He criticized De Tocqueville's Democracy in America as a "tragic proof of exaggeration in political theory." Nonetheless, many saw America as the successful application of French ideals, which had gone astray after the French Revolution. America was the embodiment and the reality of the teachings of Rousseau and others contemporary to him, said Professor of Government at Leipzig, Karl Poelitz in a three volume work in 1826.⁴⁵

A partial fulfillment of the many aspirations of disappointed Germans was emigration, but a more appealing way became the integration of the necessity to depart with the idea of re-establishing a Germany in the New World. The principal object of Franz Locher's historical work was to promote his plan to concentrate all German immigrants in the Northwest and gradually create a German state. Locher condemned Germany for doing nothing for her emigrants who were a great loss to Germany, for they were powerful, educated and capable citizens. This loss was doubled, he believed, by strengthening another people. The only answer would be to build a new Germany which would be most profitable. However, this new Germany was feasible, however, only within the boundaries of the United States, for there was the only proper way of life and freedom.⁴⁶

Gottfried Duden also fostered the idea of new Germany, for he proposed that the German initiative and capital, from the United

⁴⁵ Franz, op. cit., p. 8.

⁴⁶ Locher, op. cit., pp. 251 and 252.

States and Germany create a city in the American West to be the center of German-American culture and life. Or the emigrants could concentrate in one of the territories in sufficient numbers to control the organizations of the new state government and then by legislation establish the social customs and language of Germany.⁴⁷

Von Raumer, too, suggested that, instead of the unhappy scattering of German emigrants over all the regions of the earth, they should be united in one scheme to found a New Germany.⁴⁸

The general demand for literature regarding America resulted in a number of very influential translations of works from English and French into German. The original works were certainly not unknown in Germany, but their translations led to a more widespread dispersal of their ideas. Thus letters of Michael Chevalier, Achilles Murta, and Alexander Everett, as well as the travel reports of Oberst Hamilton, which were popular enough to demand two editions, Charles Dickens' Reisenotizen ueber Amerika demanded three translations.⁴⁹

An important work in understanding the influences upon the German concept of America is De Tocqueville's Democracy in America. This work served in Europe to prove that American democracy was salutary. Perhaps one of the greatest influences exerted by it came from its

⁴⁷Duden, op. cit., pp. 234-36, 326.

⁴⁸Von Raumer, op. cit., p. 151.

⁴⁹Franz, op. cit., p. 35.

shaping the concept of other writers. German journals, such as the Kritischen Zeitschrift, praised this work and it was often quoted in many other works, and directly influenced authors such as Hermann Abeken, Franz Grund and several others. One year after its appearance it had gone through two German editions.⁵⁰

The concept of America found expression through another source—the German immigrant already in America. Through the newspapers the German-American intellectual passed judgment upon Germany, and criticized the same things that his fellow Germans were criticizing at home. He was also reflecting again the general reasons for which he had come to America as well as suggesting a fulfillment in America that Germany failed to offer.

In the period 1845-1850 many articles appeared in leading German-American newspapers which sympathized with the plight of the common man in Germany. But it was sometimes harder to understand why the fellow-countrymen had done something to alter his circumstance, as had he who had already emigrated. For instance, in the Volksblatt⁵¹ there appeared a poem, "The Germans, a Vision," which told the story of God's judgment, when all stood before Him except the Germans who were too lazy to appear. An angel was sent to arouse them, but even he was not able to arouse them in time.

⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 15-17.

⁵¹December 29, 1845.

A poem entitled "Lullaby for Germany" appeared on February 18, 1946 with each stanza beginning, "sleep, sleep, sleep..." The general theme was that Germany might as well go ahead and sleep, since there could be nothing for which it would be worth awakening. Along the same theme, on February 23, the Volksblatt carried another poem which echoed the theme that Germany was such a happy playground that one would be glad to starve and disintegrate just for the pleasure of being there.

Although the German-Americans through their letters, papers and other correspondence supported their German brethren and encouraged emigration, they hurried to discourage the many who had a grandiose image of America. For example, on May 24, 1949 in a Volksblatt article discussing the beginning of a new era of immigration from Germany, the editors added, "We can welcome them when they are sincere in their beliefs in equality in man. But when these men come here with the idea that this is a land of 'milk and honey' then we must regret their arrival, and it would be better for such to stay where they are."

The Forty-Eighters took a prominent lead in guiding others from Germany to America. They wrote pamphlets and translated the official immigration pamphlets of a number of Midwestern states and added valuable information of specific interest to the prospective foreign immigrant. Several prominent men contributed to a journal of information for immigrants published in Goettingen, the Atlantische Studien,

which were reports designed to correct a too pessimistic view regarding the fate of the German settler in the United States.⁵²

Aside from reports circulated in Germany regarding the trickery of agents and schemes to cheat them, there were works which were designed to discredit the picture of America. One such work was the publication of the letters of Jacob Schramm. The publisher stated in the preface that his intent was to dissuade the prospective emigrant from going to America.⁵³ He claimed that the effect upon the reader would be to bind him more devotedly to his own hearth and fatherland, for the dissatisfaction of Schramm in Germany was a mere trifle in comparison to the hardships and privations which he experienced in America.⁵⁴ Thus 359 copies were ordered and distributed.

Designed to show the emigration-happy Germany that he will not find gold in America but will find only the same work and hardship as in Germany, the letters appear to a reader of our century to demonstrate only the same problems that many other letters to private families illustrate. Perhaps the publisher overestimated the effect they would have upon those with a glorious concept of America. The truth about America was probably more widespread than he realized, for many sources of information did not seek to hide problems that were commonplace to an immigrant. Rather, in comparison to Germany,

⁵²Friedrich in The Forty-Eighters, p. 75.

⁵³"The Schramm Letters," op. cit., p. 221.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 225.

the lure of America seemed to have a stronger hold on the dissatisfied German than the realization of the sufferings he would have to endure to achieve opportunity.

There were other attacks upon America. Heulsemann, in his Geschichte der Demokratie in den Vereinigten Staaten von Nord Amerika, seemed to find everything in the Goettingen library critical of America, the only positive factor being the strivings of Hamilton; his purpose, however, was not to attack the United States, but rather to persuade those dissatisfied with the Fatherland to stay at home. This he attempted to do through appeal to the fact that in America most people belonged to the third class, and that aristocratic privilege would not establish itself there.⁵⁵ Again, one can see the inherent fault in such an attack. The author seemed to assume that a nobility was desirable and that this assumption would be shared by prospective immigrants. In truth, the attraction in America was partly because such a third class was dominant.

Other criticisms of America appeared after period of turmoil within America. Thus in 1822 the Panic of 1819 precipitated two books which presented a negative picture of American economic life. Others appeared critical of America, such as Adam von Buslow, and even Gottfried Duden.⁵⁶ But Duden's criticism was directed against political factors, as previously discussed, and the total effect of

⁵⁵ Franz, op. cit., p. 5.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 3.

his work was to encourage emigration. Yet Duden pointed out that many immigrants had serious complaints about America which they expressed by returning home,⁵⁷ and other writers interjected such interpretations in otherwise favorable reports of America. J. G. Buettner in Die Vereinigten Staaten von Nord-Amerika, claimed that the reason for the failure of emigration societies was because of the circumstances of America itself.⁵⁸

A negative presentation of America often failed to achieve its goal unless the reports related to the everyday understandable things that the prospective immigrant would bother about, such as the availability of a job. The mistake made was in assuming a similar basis of understanding. Even the Allgemeine Zeitung which freely aired many of the reasons for emigration as well as spread reports which led to further emigration, philosophized in a characteristic vein when it claimed that history teaches that only monarchies can long endure, that republics carry within themselves seeds of dissolution. And the end of the American experiment was predicted as Jackson came to power.⁵⁹

The letters sent home to relatives in Germany presented America both favorably and unfavorably. Some letters directly advised relatives

⁵⁷Duden, op. cit., p. xi.

⁵⁸J. G. Buettner, Die Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika. Hamburg: 1844, pp. 21-22.

⁵⁹Hansen, op. cit., p. 160.

at home to stay there, such as one from D. Leonard of Dayton⁶⁰ in which he wrote: "I advise no one to leave for or come to America, for much more is expected than is fulfilled, and therefore they will be very disappointed." He went on to point out how his business was not doing very well, which he also did in an earlier letter.⁶¹ In both he mentioned his desire to return to Europe.

Other reports echoed the same disappointment or homesickness. H. J. Kappes wrote, in his first letter home on June 1, 1848, from St. Louis, a description of his journey with the expression of homesickness shared by the Germans aboard his ship, "If we were only home again!"⁶²

Most presented America as a place where one could not expect to get rich overnight. Hard work was stressed, as in the German-American press, as the only way to success. In a letter⁶³ an immigrant wrote a friend in Germany, "My circumstance has not been at all fruitful--so that I can present myself to you as a 'rich American.'"⁶⁴

And the immigrant faced other problems which he did not hesitate to communicate to his friends and family. Jacob Baig wrote home in 1868 that work was hard to find and money was scarce. Some immigrants

⁶⁰February 20, 1855, in Heimatstette Pfalz in Kaiserslautern.

⁶¹February 22, 1856.

⁶²See letters printed in the Pfaelzer Feierabend, January 15, 1955.

⁶³From Chicago on April 12, 1848.

⁶⁴See letters printed in Pfaelzer Feierabend, November 23, 1957.

could overcome the problem, but too many come without an occupation that is needed and without knowing the language, and bring a little money thinking it will last longer than it does. Then they are forced to work.⁶⁵

The concept of America as a rather barbaric nation was perpetuated through most letters, although the effect sometimes served to prove that there was room to shape life there, and to some this added to the romantic image of America. Wilhelm Senn wrote home in 1834 that in order to earn money he had to turn to teaching. He was asked to teach Spanish, of which he knew nothing, and for which he read a little the night before to teach it the next day. To the horror of educated Europeans, he maintained: "And to be this far ahead and to know this much in advance is quite enough in order to teach Americans."⁶⁶

The image of America as the frontier of civilization was further perpetuated by another problem that German men communicated--their difficulties in selecting wives. Jacob Emig wrote his brother in Germany that he could not find an educated German woman in America and that he would not marry an American, not because they were unattractive, but because they did not know or care about a household. The man was "their sheep," for he must work, while the "lady" did nothing except exist to be well treated.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Fischer, op. cit., p. 105.

⁶⁶ "Das Schicksal des Wilhelm Senn. . .," op. cit.

⁶⁷ Fischer, op. cit., p. 103.

Another immigrant wrote his friend in Germany, inquiring about his old "intended," because he had not yet married in America and still remembered his old sweetheart. Marriage in America was difficult for him because any woman who "even resembles the female sex is quickly grabbed up."⁶⁸

The German, who was not essentially a pioneer, could not understand the American who insisted upon elbow-room. Jacob Senn wrote home about his amazing experience with a Missouri farmer, who, although well-off, decided to move to Arkansas. Senn asked him why he would sell his good farm. He answered that he could not stay any longer, for people surrounded him at every point, and he could not move freely around the house anymore. So Senn asked how close he was to his neighbors, only to be told that it was 30 miles to one of them, 30 miles to the other, but only 20 to the third!⁶⁹

A comparison with German life and advantages was a natural one made by the thinking immigrant and was an eagerly awaited topic in the exchange of letters. Jacob Senn saw America as essentially barbaric according to German standards, but therein he found also the salvation of America. Americans sought not advancement in science, but in economic status, for "earning money is the magic word in America." Poetry had sunk to the "toy of women," art was no more

⁶⁸"Ein Pfadler in Amerika," op. cit.

⁶⁹"Das Schicksal des Wilhelm Senn," op. cit.

than a "room decoration," and music was "fashionable, but not an article of serious study." But the crudeness of America also offered unlimited political freedom and was a source of pride.

As inexperienced as the Americans are in such things, through which their level can be raised only through education, they are well acquainted with everything in their own country. They are intimately associated with their own history from the period of independence on. They adore Washington and honor him as a being of higher nature. They have not received this knowledge from laborious study but rather from tradition and their public papers. The father of the family tells them twenty times in winter evenings. But one could read the same thing in the newspapers. And who in America doesn't read a newspaper? In Philadelphia it is everywhere customary to see the people reading the newspaper in the marketplace."⁷⁰

Senn maintained that it was through this relationship with political life that the American experienced the greatest happiness, that of taking a part in his freedom, the reason for which Germans were fleeing to America. But hope was never given up that in America the uniqueness of German contributions could find expression: "We can unite the fortune of America in its realization of political freedom with our own fortune—the high position of science and sweet quiet life of our households. This combination would produce a purer and more powerful life."⁷¹

The German was eager to communicate, when he wrote, what was going on in American life. One such indication came in a letter from 1861 when one immigrant wrote that he was sending a weekly newspaper

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Ibid.

from America for his family to read, and then he asked his family to take it to the marketplace so that the whole town would have the chance to know what was going on in America.⁷²

Political events interested the German in the old country. Letters reflect the development of the slavery issue, and the unity of the German-American on it. Daniel Hertle wrote, in 1848, that the political agitation over Kansas was becoming boring, because everyone here and the world over realizes that Kansas must remain a free state and that its inhabitants are against slavery.⁷³

America was not free from corruption and the disappointment that had driven Germans from the old country. Hertle wrote home in 1848 of a scandal in Washington that "makes the naive wonder whether the American union can hold together." But he finds consolation in the fact that the money stolen was a small part of the total wealth and that the people themselves had no part in the corruption and even look upon the whole affair as despicable.⁷⁴

But almost every letter which was informative was devoted at least in part to an explanation of economic opportunity. Often the advice sent home was of a discouraging nature, in order not to encourage an over-eager friend or relative to come with false hopes. One wrote that it would be better for his brother to come with the money to buy land rather than come in order to earn it as a hired

⁷²Die Rheinpfalz, August 23, 1956.

⁷³"Ein Pfälzer in Amerika," op. cit.

⁷⁴Ibid.

hand. Land was too expensive, \$100-300 an acre near the city, and living farther from the city would be too hard.⁷⁵

Others wrote that their jobs yielded enough to cover their immediate living, but not enough to prepare for the future.⁷⁶ Whenever business was bad, letters yielded complaints. In 1886 one immigrant wrote home from Dayton that he had had to cut down his usual hiring from 15-18 persons to 10-12, for he was having business difficulties.⁷⁷

One of the basic reasons that was often given friends and relatives for their remaining at home was that the training one received in Germany was not the same as what was required to get along in America. Thus Jacob Nicklies wrote from Dayton in 1888 that he had been in America for forty years, yet when he arrived his education in Germany did not fit him for work. So he had to study two years longer to be useful. "The relationship between the way of living and what is useful is so different from the European connection that it is impossible to describe it to you. You would not be able to comprehend it and would consider much of it impossible." Many fell apart under the strain.⁷⁸

The German immigrant felt called upon to explain the situations

⁷⁵Die Rheinpfalz, August 20, 1956.

⁷⁶"Ein Pfälzer in Amerika," op. cit.

⁷⁷"Nicht immer war es....," op. cit.

⁷⁸Ibid.

evoking criticism from the old country. Thus in 1848 one wrote that although the European held the gold situation against America, it was true that this misfortune was attributed to America in order to throw the blame on someone else. As the Europeans blamed the Americans, so the farmer complained about the city man, and the city people attacked the farmers. The workers accused the employer and vice versa. But in reality the situation was not so bad because gold still commanded a high price. As a matter of fact, the letter went on, the clever Americans were now buying while the market was low in order to capitalize when it rose. Thus the writer advised his friends in Germany to put a thousand dollars into some American business, but not the Erie-Ohio railroad, because everyone had known for two years that it would go bankrupt.⁷⁹

Homesickness was reflected in most letters to relatives, although pride in and love of America was often reflected at the same time. Letters always asked to be remembered to old friends and relatives, and a letter, while containing such an expression as "Oh the waves that sweep my heart when I think of you and our old parents and brothers in the Homeland. . ." shortly thereafter concluded: "But don't think that America is not larger than the market in Grunstadt!"⁸⁰

⁷⁹"Ein Pfälzer in Amerika," op. cit.

⁸⁰Die Rheinpfalz, August 23, 1956.

Relatives who would never meet again took consolation in the constant memories and dreams and in the thought that "nature demands its rights and we must be reunited in Eternity."⁸¹

Yet few of the immigrants expressly regretted their decision to come to America, especially after they had been in America long enough to settle. One letter, written shortly after arrival in America, bears a postscript "I haven't told you yet. It is not as nice here as in Europe, but I still don't ever want to leave."⁸² Jacob Senn wrote home from the beginning that he thought he wanted to remain in America forever.⁸³ Jakob Risser wrote from Mansfield, Ohio, in 1888 to relatives he had never met in Friedelsheim of his at last finding his dream: "I can not conclude this letter without noting how wonderful God has directed me by his Fatherland, for I was tossed around and suffered from hunger in my youth, without father, mother and country. Many times I felt a painful homesickness and I had no homeland to which I could turn, until at last, through the rich grace of God I have found one."⁸⁴

⁸¹Letter from Dayton, February 22, 1886, in Heimatstelle Pfalz in Kaiserslautern.

⁸²Letter from Katharina Risser to her mother, October 16, 1832, in Heimatstelle Pfalz.

⁸³"Das Schicksal des Wilhelm Senn. . .," op. cit.

⁸⁴July 11, 1888, in Heimatstelle Pfalz, Kaiserslautern.

CHAPTER IV

THE CINCINNATI GERMANS

Albert Faust maintains that the German element was indistinguishable from the native in its currents of westward movement along (1) the Mohawk River, (2) through central Pennsylvania to Pittsburgh or via the Pennsylvania mountains to Pittsburgh, and (3) along the Valley of Virginia to Lexington and then to Cumberland Gap, opening a gateway into Kentucky.¹ Studies of the early population of Cincinnati indicate a composite of settlers from these areas and from the adjacent states which used these routes as a gateway to the West, and specifically to Cincinnati conveniently located at the crossroad.

In Cincinnati in 1810, the majority of inhabitants were Americans and foreign immigrants from New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Maryland, New York, and the New England states.² Editor Charles Cist, who compiles his most important newspaper records into three books finds these same elements forming the population in 1840³ indicating that these routes continued to bring settlers into Cincinnati.

¹Faust, op. cit., p. 434.

²See Emil Klauprecht, Deutsche Chronik in der Geschichte des Ohio Thales und seiner Hauptstadt Cincinnati. Cincinnati: Jacobi, 1860, p. 138;

Armin Tenner, Cincinnati Sonst und Jetzt. Cincinnati: Necklenberg and Rosenthal, 1878, p. 44.

³Charles Cist, Cincinnati in 1841. Cincinnati: published by Cist, 1841, p. 38.

But even though Cincinnati was a terminal point for much immigration, Cist maintained that a fair share were transitory, moving to various points west. "Hundreds upon hundreds" in the twenty-five years preceding 1845 went on further west.⁴ By 1850, the German born inhabitants who had originally come from the East⁵ but were increased later by a more direct influx of compatriots, made up two thirds of the total foreign population, while the Cincinnati born native population increased to three fourths of the total population, with the remaining persons being natives of the same eastern states already indicated.⁶

Immigration to Ohio was attracted through various means, and was mainly linked with Cincinnati. Cheap and fertile land, complete safety in the title for land and high wages for work pulled the immigrants in numbers to Cincinnati, and when Ohio was incorporated as a state and Cincinnati as a city in 1802, with the exclusion of slavery, the tide of influx was pulled toward Ohio. "The European immigration itself was attracted through the fact that Ohio had been declared as a free state, and many Europeans came to Ohio from Kentucky and Tennessee."⁷

The Germans were not very numerous in the early days of Cincinnati. Even by 1825, the German traveller Charles Sealsfield was impressed by

⁴Charles Cist, The Cincinnati Miscellany, Vol. II. Cincinnati: Robinson and Jones, 1846, p. 170.

⁵Klauprecht, Deutsche Chronik, p. 139.

⁶Charles Cist, Cincinnati in 1859, Cincinnati, 1859, p. 165.

⁷Tenner, Sonst und Jetzt, p. 42.

the number of Germans in Zanesville, Lancaster, Canton, and Dayton, but does not mention Cincinnati.⁸ In relationship to the other European immigrants, the English and Scotch came first, followed later by the Germans. As a result of the Napoleonic wars, the first direct German immigration was stymied. The few Germans who were able to come did not possess their own free rights, but were indentured as servants in order to defray the price of sea travel.⁹

Although Germans were not numerous in the early settlement of Cincinnati, the few who were there were very influential. David Ziegler had defended the settlement and became the first mayor of Cincinnati.¹⁰ A general history of Cincinnati describes the German, Martin Baum, from Hagenau in Alsace as "in those days the wealthiest and most respected citizen of the town;"¹¹ Baum built the first iron foundry and the first sugar mill in the West. He founded the first bank and served as its agent for many years. He set up textile factories, steam mills, introduced sail boats on the Ohio and Mississippi, and served twice as mayor.¹²

Baum was the man who furthered the German immigration to Cincinnati in its beginning stages, and arranged for the German "redemptioners," who without money to pay for their passage were "sold" by the ship captain to anyone who would buy their services for a stated

⁹Klauprecht, Deutsche Chronik, p. 138.

¹⁰Faust, op. cit., p. 424.

¹¹Ford, op. cit., p. 128.

¹²Faust, op. cit., p. 424.

time in return for paying the passage money. But perhaps these immigrants who sought an opportunity in the new country were fortunate in falling into the hands of Baum rather than into those of a less sympathetic buyer, for "In Baum, all these newcomers found a real friend, one who could talk their language and who could counsel them in their problems and give them employment or help to find it elsewhere."¹³ Baum was also the first land-owner and projector of the present city of Toledo, and when he died in 1831, he was hailed as the greatest pioneer of Western commerce.¹⁴

These first German arrivals, beginning around 1810 and accelerating about 1815, were largely bakers, then gardeners, and finally Cincinnati's first candymakers.¹⁵ The first German Jewish family came in this first flood of German immigration, and brought about a large Jewish influx within the next five years. In 1817 this first Jewish family was so well received that they wrote their fellows in Germany letters which were so full of praise and which declared, "God in heaven has prepared for his people spread over the world with a land of peace and fortune found in the far West of America." These letters stirred up the Jews in Germany powerfully to emigrate to Cincinnati. Already by 1822 they were well enough represented that

¹³ Matthew, op. cit., p. 228.

¹⁴ Faust, op. cit., p. 425.

¹⁵ Klauprecht, deutsche Chronik, p. 154.

they could form a Jewish section of the city with the first synagogue in the entire West.¹⁶

The strength of the German immigration came in the thirty years following 1810, and resulted in a great increase in the Cincinnati population, and consequently in the bestowal of the title, "Queen of the West," for the city.¹⁷ It was 1830 when the German element was substantially beginning to establish itself.¹⁸ Before 1830, the German element, although increasing, was not distinguishable. Thus a local historian said, that the inhabitants are emigrants "from different parts of Europe, yet there is no portion of them from any group so numerous as to cause a general adherence to the peculiar prejudices and manners in which they had been educated!"¹⁹ But from 1820 to 1835 all of the counties on the line between Cincinnati and Toledo received Germans.²⁰

Checking the list of German names in the Wegweiser, or German directory for 1824, one finds that 159 Germans were in business in Cincinnati and employed in respectable occupations: gardeners, sweet-makers, grocers, woodcarvers, butchers, shoemakers, metal workers, etc.²¹

¹⁶Tenner, op. cit., p. 47.

¹⁷"Cincinnati, eine Historische Skizze", op. cit., p. 54.

¹⁸E. M. Rosebaum and F. P. Weisenburger, History of Ohio. New York: Prentice Hall, 1934, p. 177.

¹⁹Ohio Reference Library, Historical Gazetteer of Ohio, Simeon D. Fess, editor. Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1937, V. III, p. 125.

²⁰Faust, op. cit., p. 428.

²¹See Klauprecht, Deutsche Chronik for list, p. 159.

By 1835, C. E. Stowe, Professor at Lane Seminary, which was affiliated with the Emigrant Friend's Society, declared that most Germans depend for subsistence upon their daily labor, although there are some of considerable wealth. He notices already the strong tendency among Germans to seek their own home and piece of land: "A good farm, owned and cultivated by himself, is a German's paradise and the highest reward of a novitiate of industry and economy. Recently the number of men of property among the immigrants has increased."²²

In 1830 only five per cent of the population was German, but by 1840 it had increased to twenty-three per cent,²³ or more than quadrupled. There were several interesting characteristics of the new immigration from Germany into Cincinnati. For one thing, Klauprecht reports that the immigrants were streaming in from North Germany, while before 1826 North Germany was represented by only a few men,²⁴ but immigration to the United States in general was coming from the south and southwest of Germany,²⁵ and it was not until the 1840's that immigration began from such western states as Hesse, the Rhineland, and Westphalia.²⁶ Professor Stowe determined the immigration by 1835 as mostly coming to Cincinnati from Wurtemberg, Hanover, "and

²²C. E. Stowe, "Education of Immigrants," in Transactions of the Fifty Annual Meeting of the Western Literary Institute And College of Professional Teachers, in Cincinnati, October, 1835. Cincinnati Executive Council, 1836, p. 62.

²³Faust, op. cit., p. 426.

²⁴Klauprecht, Deutsche Chronik, p. 170.

²⁵See Chapter I, p. 5.

²⁶Ibid.

other northern and western states of Germany," with only some from Saxony and Bavaria, and a very few from Austria and Prussia.²⁷ Thus Cincinnati was receiving in the 1830s a geographically different group than was the rest of the nation at the same time. These were the forerunners of the larger immigration from these areas for the nation as a whole in the 1840s.

The immigrants were arriving primarily in family groups, but they were mostly workers who came to Cincinnati with the "help yourself" practical approach. This was different, for example, from the immigration into St. Louis which was composed of officials, students, and intellectuals,²⁸ members of the "dreissiger" immigration.

In 1834, a German traveller estimated the German born population at 10,000, and reported that he found the native language spoken everywhere, with peasants from home still continually arriving.²⁹ An estimate of 10,000 seems to be generally accepted as the German numerical strength, for C. S. Stowe in 1835 says, "There are not less than 10,000 Germans in Cincinnati, and its immediate vicinity, including those only, who live so near the city as to attend church here on the Sabbath."³⁰

But the German population met with some serious setbacks. One of

²⁷ Stowe, op. cit., p. 61.

²⁸ Klauprecht, Deutsche Chronik, p. 170.

²⁹ Rosenblum, op. cit., p. 177.

³⁰ Stowe, op. cit., p. 61.

these was the flood of 1832 which caused much property damage. But by far the more serious was the cholera epidemic of the same year. Three hundred fifty-one people died after it broke out on September 30, coming in through an immigrant ship which docked at Quebec.³¹ Although such a ravage is destructive to the population in general, the foreign elements seem to have been the greatest sufferers. The Superintendent of the Seventh Census reported that "within the period of cholera visitations the foreign population experienced the dreadful effects of its ravages to the most frightful extent."³² There were two other epidemics of cholera in 1834 and 1849.

Although this probably had a deterring effect on either emigration from Germany or on immediate entry into Cincinnati, Mrs. Tafel records in her diary that when their family arrived in New York and were informed of the epidemic in Cincinnati, they decided to proceed anyway.³³

Cincinnati took on its pronounced German characteristics as a result of the heavy immigration that had begun before rather than after the collapse of the 1848 revolution. The center of German life by the 40s was the "Over the Rhine" district, along Vine Street and north of the old canal.³⁴

³¹ Klauprecht, Deutsche Chronik, p. 171.

³² Report of the Superintendent of the Census for December 1, 1852, The Seventh Census. Washington, 1853, p. 15.

³³ Koester, op. cit., p. 19.

³⁴ Fess, op. cit., p. 325.

Nonetheless the newcomers from Germany were arriving in ever-increasing numbers. Henry L. Ford claimed that Hamilton County had an absolute increase in population of 150% between 1840 and 1850, and much of it could be attributed to the arrival of nineteen immigrants per day in Cincinnati, Sundays included, during the ten-year period.³⁵

Charles Cist provides the best analysis for the relative strength of the German in Cincinnati by 1840.³⁶ The German stock amounted to 14,163 persons, or one third of the adult population. Of the male population, the Germanic states yielded 3,440 or 28% of the population. The majority, 54% were native born. In contrast to the German element, Great Britain, mostly Ireland and Wales, provided 16% of the total.

The importance of the German immigration of the 1840's is reflected in the Cincinnati German newspapers of the time. The Cincinnati Volksblatt, established in 1836, and issued continuously until World War I, quickly overshadowed all the city's German language papers and is the most important source of information. It was the first and for a long time the only daily in the entire field of German-American journalism.³⁷

By 1843 the Volksblatt advertised for a messenger to take money and messages to family and friends in Germany, and to bring messages to them from Europe.

³⁵ Henry A. Ford and Mrs. Kate B. Ford, History of Hamilton County, Ohio. Cincinnati: Williams and Co., 1881, p. 52.

³⁶ Cist, Cincinnati in 1841, pp. 37-39.

³⁷ Carl Wittke, German-American Language Press in America. University of Kentucky Press, 1957, p. 52.

As the immigration grew progressively larger, the Volksblatt reported to the Cincinnati Germans that whole villages lay abandoned, and that the individual German governments were embarrassed since the largest quantity of emigrants belonged to the industrial and better citizenry.³⁸ By 1850 the German stock had reached 27% of the total population.³⁹

The great influx of German immigrants coincided with and contributed to the tremendous population growth of Cincinnati. While the increase of population between 1830 and 1840 had been 90%, the ratio from 1840 to 1850 was a 150% increase, placing Cincinnati among those cities whose growth was not exhausting its elements or diminishing its ratio.⁴⁰

By 1850 Ohio contained, next to New York, the largest German born population.⁴¹ In Ohio itself, the German born population represented approximately 6% of the total, and more than half of the immigrant population.⁴²

But Cincinnati shows the distinct concentration of Germans within her limits. Approximately 6% of the nation's Germans were located in Cincinnati, and 30% of Ohio's Germans.⁴³ The German born in Cincinnati

³⁹Faust, op. cit., p. 426.

⁴⁰Cist, op. cit., p. 164.

⁴¹U. S. Bureau of the Census, The Seventh Census of the United States, 1850. Washington, 1853, p. xxvi.

⁴²See Seventh Census, pp. xxvi, 851, and from Statistical View of the United States; Compendium of the Seventh Census. Washington: Senate Printer, 1854, p. 399.

⁴³Ibid.

represented 25% of the total population, and was not far short of the number of Cincinnati inhabitants born in Ohio itself. The Irish, the next largest immigrant group, represented 10% of the total population.⁴⁴ Although the German and foreign born concentration was highest in the Middle States, still Cincinnati was above this average. The foreign born population was about 20% of the whole in the Middle States, compared with a national average of 12%,⁴⁵ but in Cincinnati the foreign born represented close to 49%, of which the Germans were over 60%.⁴⁶

Even though the greater flow of Germans was coming into the city, there were also those who were leaving. The nativist movement, "No Nothingism" led to murder and threats against the German population, reaching such proportions in 1856 that over a hundred German families left Cincinnati with their furniture and goods, moving to the northern states. The majority emigrated to Wisconsin.⁴⁷

By 1860 the German stock formed 30% of the Cincinnati population,⁴⁸ and 60% of the foreign born population.⁴⁹ Cincinnati still retained its importance as a German center, for only New York City surpassed her

⁴⁴Fess, op. cit., p. 325.

⁴⁵Statistical Review of Seventh Census, op. cit., p. 121.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 399.

⁴⁷Klauprecht, Deutsche Chronik, op. cit., p. 192.

⁴⁸Faust, op. cit., p. 426.

⁴⁹Klauprecht, Deutsche Chronik, op. cit., p. 197.

with its German born population. And the next German populated city had only two-thirds of Cincinnati's strength.⁵⁰ But the spectacular era of German immigration was to exhaust itself here, for by the end of the next decade the German stock showed only an increase of 517 persons!⁵¹

The reasons for this decline are varied. The Civil War resulted in a decline in general immigration. The popularity of the war among Germans led to widespread participation, and a decrease in the German element and its rate of increase. Also a natural decrease in new arrivals corresponds to the national picture of German immigration for this era.

However, after the Civil War, another high wave of German immigration began, which apparently never made itself felt in Cincinnati, for not only was there a tapering off of the numbers of Germans by 1870, but 1880 showed an actual decrease of 3,291 persons from the decade before.⁵² This decrease becomes even more alarming when one compares the rate of increase in a growing city such as Chicago. If the German immigrant statistics for Chicago presented in a dissertation for the years 1860, 1870, and 1880 are correct,⁵³ then the percentage

⁵¹ Figures taken from Population in 1860, p. 612, and from Compendium of the Ninth Census, p. 395.

⁵² Figures for compilation taken from Compendium of the Eighth Census. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1888, p. 546.

⁵³ Andrew J. Townsend, "The Germans of Chicago," (dissertation) Deutsch Amerikanische Geschichtsblätter, 1932, XXII, p. 11.

of increase from German immigration over the decade ending in 1870 was about 136% and from 1870 to 1880, 240%.

There are several reasons which might account for this sudden change. Faust maintains that the Germans "have advanced into every new state in numbers proportionate to the resources of the section,"⁵⁴ and after the Civil War the new German immigrants were again attracted by the offering of a homestead, and felt "keenly alive to the desirability of possessing land."⁵⁵

The census figures show the increasing numbers of Germans settling in new Far Western states. Although the concentration remained in the Middle States, nonetheless by 1870 the strong concentration of Germans in California and a not insignificant appearance in Colorado and Montana demonstrates a movement farther westward.⁵⁶ A comparison of German statistics of 1850 and 1900 reveals the smaller proportion residing in the same sections of the country where they originally had settled, with the tendency to infiltrate areas added to the Union.⁵⁷

Another factor would be that as industrial workers came from Germany, they would tend to be attracted more by the new cities offering the greatest promise.

⁵⁴ Faust, op. cit., p. 436.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 586.

⁵⁶ Compendium Ninth Census, op. cit., p. 392.

⁵⁷ Department of Commerce and Labor Bureau of the Census, A Century of Population Growth From the First Census of the United States to the Twelfth, 1790-1900. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1909, p. 131.

Although Cincinnati remained first among Ohio cities until 1890, the spectacular rate of increase in its growth began to taper off by 1870.⁵⁸ This corresponds with the similar decrease in German strength, for the relationship of the German stock to Cincinnati population did not decrease. By 1869 German stock represented 34% of the population, and had increased to 41% by 1900,⁵⁹ although it had declined in the intermediary years. Thus the strength of the mid-nineteenth century character of German immigration, not replenished substantially in the 1860s through 1880s, was enough to eventually sustain the concentration of German stock.

Cincinnati's German immigration begins to reveal by 1860 the changing character of the movement which reached its crest in the 70s and 80s from south and southwest to the north of Germany by the Prussia representation which was one-eighth of the whole.⁶⁰ Yet Prussians represented only one person out of every two hundred and twenty-six in 1850.⁶¹ The approximation of origin of Germans for 1870 and 1880 supports the coincidence of the Cincinnati trend with the national trend.⁶²

⁵⁸ See Fess, op. cit., p. 325.

⁵⁹ Faust, op. cit., p. 426.

⁶⁰ See Population of the United States in 1860, op. cit., p. 612.

⁶¹ See Statistical View for Seventh Census, op. cit., p. 399.

⁶² See Compendium for Ninth Census, p. 394, and Compendium for Eighth Census, pp. 548 and 549 for figures to compute.

By 1890 Cincinnati had dropped to seventh among cities with a large German population, and already Cleveland was beginning to rival her in Ohio with 39,800 Germans there compared with Cincinnati's 49,400.⁶³

One characteristic of the immigration of the German, which is very demonstrable and pronounced in the case of the Cincinnati community, involves his tendency not to assimilate directly into American society culturally, but rather to identify himself with his own national group.

As soon as immigration to Cincinnati took place, the German began to found societies in the city, wherein the people could congregate for humanitarian, scientific, religious, and other purposes. The first was the Freimauer Lodge of 1794, from which the German group founded the "Germania" Lodge in 1848.⁶⁴

In the early 1800s when German names began to appear in Cincinnati society, music and singing for which the German holds an innate fondness, began to manifest itself. Stanley Matthew traces active German participation back to 1810 when they participated in an organization meeting for a singing society,⁶⁵ but Klauprecht claims that the first musical society was formed in 1816 by Americans, and it was later in the back of a bakery shop that the Germans organized

⁶³Figures from Report on Population of the United States at the Eleventh Census, 1890, Part I. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1890, pp. 670-1.

⁶⁴Tanner, op. cit., p. 56.

⁶⁵Matthew, op. cit., p. 143.

a group by themselves.⁶⁶ This first group of 1839 met every Thursday evening in the heart of the German district.⁶⁷

Now that the Germans had organized their own group, their singing organizations grew. In 1846 a concert and ball were given,⁶⁸ and by 1849 they were ready to invite other German-American groups from Missouri, Indiana, Wisconsin, and Kentucky, as well as from Ohio. This meeting is illustrative of not only the cultural position among Germans in general which Cincinnati had attained through its German population, but also of the preservation of an Old World custom complete with at least one outdoor performance.⁶⁹

A German reading and educational society as well as an Immigrant Society had been founded in 1834.⁷⁰

Another typical habit which continued to set the Germans aside from other elements was their continuance in celebrating events connected with Germany. Already in 1818, they began to celebrate yearly the freeing of Germany from Napoleon's grasp. Many other national memorial days were celebrated, as well as the birthdays of Goethe, Schiller and Jean Paul, the invention of printing, Schiller's hundredth birthday, the death of Alexander von Humboldt, the war

⁶⁶ Klauprecht, Deutsche Chronik, p. 155.

⁶⁷ "Reisebilder und Skizzen aus Amerika," Deutsche Pionier, September, 1875, VII, p. 260.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 262.

⁶⁹ Matthew, op. cit., p. 143.

⁷⁰ Tenner, op. cit., p. 56.

against France, and the lives of Cincinnati Germans.⁷¹

An important source for binding Germans together, especially the two different types, the Greens and Greys, resulting from the immigration from the 1830s and 1840s, was the Deutsche Gesellschaft. The local historian, Henry A. Ford, claims that it was "a necessity very much felt" to establish a society like those existing in other parts of the country, so that the ruptures and discords that resulted in political weakness and want of freedom in Germany would be prevented.⁷² The purpose avowed by the group at its time of founding was, "That we as citizens of the United States can take part in a native society as our duty and right dictate to us."⁷³

Not only did the Germans of Cincinnati identify themselves with Germany, but also the Germans in the Fatherland considered their American emigrants as not lost to them, but rather as Germans who had traded homelands and adopted American citizenship. Thus they tended to turn to the Americans to share their joys and sorrows. For the Hamburger Brandes a sum was collected in Cincinnati, and again in 1847 the sympathy of Cincinnati Germans for their starving brothers aroused Germans from the north and south to come to Cincinnati and donate \$8000 to send to Germany. As on other occasions, Cincinnati

⁷¹Anton Bickhoff, In Der Neuen Heimat. New York: Steiger and Co., 1884, p. 300.

⁷²Ford, History of Cincinnati, op. cit., p. 129.

⁷³Bickhoff, op. cit., p. 292.

Germans raised 150,000 marks for the oppressed in Wassernoth am Rhein.⁷⁴

A great celebration was held in 1850, the Hambacher Fest, on Jackson Hill, which demonstrated harmony and unity among the Germans. They demonstrated their sympathy with Germany in her struggle for democracy and unity.⁷⁵

The extent to which Germans in Cincinnati grouped together in societies for their various interests and professions can be seen by examining the Germany Society Directory in the pre-World War I days. In Cincinnati, in 1915, there are listed and described 116 different societies and groups, composed of Germans and with German names.⁷⁶

The language barrier was another factor that prevented the direct assimilation of the German element. In 1835 Professor Stowe reported that not more than one-fourth of the German population could speak English.⁷⁷ The insistence by the Germans to perpetuate the language in the public schools did not help to obliterate this difference, and the teaching of German was maintained in the school system down to World War I.

Yet Charles Cist in 1851 maintained that "Of All classes of

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 300.

⁷⁵Klauprecht, Deutsche Chronik, op. cit., pp. 182-3.

⁷⁶See August B. Gorbach, Deutscher Vereins-Wegweiser. Cincinnati: Gorbach, 1915.

⁷⁷Stowe, op. cit., p. 61.

foreigners, the German soonest assimilates to the great mass. It takes but one generation to obliterate all the distinctive marks of his race—even of language, usually a most tenacious feature."⁷⁸ Perhaps the German element did diffuse, but it never lost its distinctive characteristics in the nineteenth century. It had not assimilated enough to prevent a violent outburst of nativism in 1855, and Cist himself, while suggesting the elimination of the language barrier, points out that eight newspapers printed in German were circulated in Cincinnati in 1851.⁷⁹

Another reason for the slow assimilation as an American group has been that foreigners, and especially the Germans, tended to marry within their own immigrant or German stock circle. The prevalence of this led the Superintendent of the Census in 1850 to state, "There are comparatively few instances of natives and aliens uniting together, so few are these that they do not militate with the general rule."⁸⁰

The history of a prominent German Cincinnati minister, George Walker, demonstrates the exclusion that was either typical of the German or considered typical by the Americans, both of which served to further isolate him in society.

⁷⁸Cist, Cincinnati in 1859, op. cit., p. 166.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 212-15.

⁸⁰Statistical View of Seventh Census, op. cit., p. 121.

Sent by the Lutheran Synod of Baltimore and coming to Cincinnati from Tubingen, Walker dedicated his talents to the German enterprises and societies which had charity as their object, or which were devoted to sociability and education. Ford describes him as belonging "to the large number of immigrating Germans, who, although endowed with good talents and comprehensive knowledge, exclude themselves from all but their own countrymen, and the American world does not exist for them at all."⁸¹

Although identifying American education with its distinctive German character, the Cincinnati Germans demonstrated their demand for education in their fight to attend and to have German instruction in the public school.

The earliest Germans had no resort in acclimating themselves to American life other than to attach themselves to their English speaking fellow city inhabitants, and to send their children to their schools and churches. This arrangement was often unsatisfactory, and already by 1810 Behm was holding school hours in German, and church groups and societies met together for education.⁸²

The first considerable effort to educate the German children was made by a group of men from Lane Seminary, who formed the

⁸¹Ford, History of Cincinnati, p. 137.

⁸²Tanner, op. cit., pp 45-6.

"Emigrant Friend Society, to instruct the children of foreigners in the English language."⁸³

The eagerness of German parents for education for their children was generally acknowledged. The background of education in Germany was attributed to this determination. Professor Stowe claims that the enlightened policy of Prussia made it impossible for a child to grow up without a good business education, and commented that those from along the provinces of the Rhine usually spoke French.⁸⁴ By 1854, the Superintendent of the Census explained the German sense of education in terms of the extensive school laws and training in Germany, which were summarized in the Compendium.⁸⁵

The receptiveness of the German children to education prompted favorable comments from the teachers of Lane Seminary. One teacher described them as "uncommonly apt at learning, and much more attentive than American children." Another praised their facility in learning language and claimed that "Ideality and language are their prominent developments."⁸⁶

But the question was not so simple as the ability or interest of the Germans. Their presence as a foreign element caused reaction against them, which hindered their acceptance into the American

⁸³Stowe, op. cit., p. 63.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 62.

⁸⁵Statistical View of Seventh Census, op. cit., p. 147.

⁸⁶Stowe, op. cit., p. 64.

educational system. The Emigrant's Friend Society reported that most of the 1200 to 1500 German children of school age were deprived of the advantages of common English schools because they were foreigners and spoke a foreign language. Even the English speaking Germans were deterred because their foreign garb and accent exposed them to ridicule. Professor Stowe summarized the American reaction: "When they first arrive on our shores they are always anxious to educate their children, and their anxiety never ceases until it is extinguished by the contagious influence of the money-loving habits of our own population."⁸⁷

The Emigrant's Friend Society school did not satisfy the Germans and by 1839 there was strong public pressure for them to go to public schools.⁸⁸

But already the Germans had demonstrated their tendency to turn to politics to accomplish their goal. For when the Board of Education had turned down their petition for German instruction in the public schools, on the basis that this was the concern of the legislature, they went to the legislature. However, the bill, which read "might" teach German, was interpreted by Whigs against the German interest. By 1839 the German influence was enough to change the wording of the bill, and by their nearly unanimously effort, the

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 62.

⁸⁸ Cincinnati Turnfest-Fuehrer, op. cit., p. 72.

Democrats consented to their law in the election of 1840.⁸⁹

But the fight did not end here, for the Whig majority thought they could cripple the school by establishing a purely German school with an English principal, and thus dismissed the German principal. The Germans reacted by forming a committee and established schools of their own.⁹⁰ The first German-English free school opened, although the German teachers had to be paid out of their own pockets, and the German churches had to come to their aid. This battle continued until 1844.⁹¹

The end result was German-English education. Since the law was passed in 1840, two schools were erected in Cincinnati with five teachers and 250 students. By 1860 the number had risen to 49 schools with 4,798 students. There were also from 600 to 700 Germans in Catholic schools. Considering other sectarian schools, there were probably 1000 German school children in 1860 compared with 500 in 1837.⁹²

The first German organizations in Cincinnati generated from the churches. But the distinctive feature of development is the disunity and constant splitting that resulted from differences which often were not religious.

As early as 1808 the missionary Boehm visited the Ohio area,

⁸⁹Ford, History of Cincinnati, p. 134.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 134.

⁹¹Cincinnati Turnfest-Fuehrer, p. 72.

⁹²Klauprecht, Deutsche Chronik, p. 197.

speaking in German. On September 4, 1808, the first German sermon was preached. In 1810 Boehm began to hold consultations in a school-house, and organized the first German congregation which was Methodist. In 1811 the Moravian preacher Saeslein arrived in Cincinnati and helped organize a German-Lutheran congregation. After his death a United Christian Brethren missionary, Guelich, supervised the congregation.

In the Lutheran church the battle that had existed between the Swabians and non-Swabians broke out when the plans for a new church were proposed. The congregation split into two churches. Then another group broke away, demanding that their minister speak only low German. Now a third Lutheran church had been formed.⁹³

A Catholic church was established in 1811 and in 1822 received a bishop. Since most Catholics in Cincinnati were German, he conducted services in German.⁹⁴ But in 1834 antagonism between the English and Germans led them away to establish their own church.⁹⁵ By 1835 it was estimated that from 2,000 to 3,000 of the 10,000 Germans were Protestant, and the remainder Catholic.⁹⁶

The Catholic Germans tended to demonstrate an even greater seclusion than their Protestant countrymen. The Catholics not only

⁹³ Cincinnati Turnfest-Fuehrer, pp. 65-9.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 68.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 69.

⁹⁶ Stowe, op. cit., p. 61.

built their own German-English schools, but founded their own support societies and their own immigrant club.⁹⁷

Characteristic of immigration in general, and of that to Cincinnati in particular, is the reaction against it. As immigration to Cincinnati grew and the savings of the newcomers were exhausted, the older elements began to demand the limiting of "the swarms of indigent foreigners whom the selfish policy of sundry European governments is vomiting upon our shores."⁹⁸

As Cincinnati was a central point of German life for several states and an illustration of the full bloom of its society and organization,⁹⁹ it was natural that the endeavor of the German element to secure its rights would be particularly felt in Cincinnati, as Ford maintains it was.¹⁰⁰ The striving for German language in the educational system is perhaps illustrative of this.

But prejudice on the part of the American native public was not confined to the education issue. Even the Emigrant Friend's Society expressed concern over the numerous "whiskey shops, which, under the name of coffee houses, blot our city" and which corrupt the Germans "as the devil could desire."¹⁰¹

It was around this time that the first great insult from the Nativist movement expressed itself. This reaction was active in

⁹⁷ Cincinnati Turnfest-Fuehrer, p. 73.

⁹⁸ Rosebaum and Weisenburger, op. cit., p. 177.

⁹⁹ Rickhoff, op. cit., p. 298.

¹⁰⁰ Ford, History of Cincinnati, p. 129.

¹⁰¹ Stowe, op. cit., p. 62.

1836 and 1837 and then began again in the early 1840s. Although beginning somewhat later in the West than in the East, by 1837 the Ohio "Native American" party, connected primarily with the Whigs, grew tremendously in Cincinnati. It was essentially this which drove the politically weak Germans into politics,¹⁰² although the issue of education became coupled with the political impetus.

This was not the first bout of the Germans with politics. Cincinnati was especially good soil for political newspapers, and in 1834 Die Weltbuerger, a Whig paper, began. In 1836 the Democratic Volksblatt came into existence.¹⁰³ The old German element had tended to be Whig, but the new immigration in the 1830s was more politically aggressive, supporting the Democratic party and entering into the battle between General Jackson and Henry Clay.¹⁰⁴

But as more Germans were drawn more actively into politics as a result of the reaction against them, the complaint against them turned more to a fear of their political position. The German element was considered a dangerous, unaccountable factor, which could not be maneuvered by wish or will as one would have liked. It was a general allegation in the latter 1830s that the great number

¹⁰²Richhoff, op. cit., p. 294.

¹⁰³Witke, German-American Language Newspapers, p. 51.

¹⁰⁴Klauprecht, Deutsche Chronik, p. 170.

of Germans would outweigh the English and the shores of the Rhein, Donau, Elbe and Weser would outvote those of native America.¹⁰⁵

Exactly when the German went over the Democratic party is disputed, but Anton Eickhoff maintains that it was before the Nativist force drove him there.¹⁰⁶ At any rate, it was in 1840 when the German vote had substantially increased from the election of 1836. At this time it was apparent that the German was attracted to the Democratic party for many reasons. The liberal naturalization laws were attributable to them, during the time of Jefferson. Around 1820 the Democrats had led in lowering the price of public land and allowing smaller lots to be sold. About 1830 liberal pre-emption laws were adopted, and Henry Clay had spoken against allowing the right of pre-emption to non-citizen settlers. Even the term "Democratic" attracted the German. But the promise of land appealed to him most of all. With the Whigs supporting the tariff and apparent involvement in the Nativist movement,¹⁰⁷ the German was left with no other alternative.

But the fear of the German vote was perhaps overrated. Eickhoff claims "It was an ungrounded fear."¹⁰⁸ Cist wrote an article in 1845, arguing that "there seems to exist a disposition in the party political and religious presses, to overrate the numbers of both

¹⁰⁵Eickhoff, op. cit., p. 293.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., p. 291.

¹⁰⁷Ford, History of Cincinnati, pp. 138-9.

¹⁰⁸Eickhoff, op. cit., p. 293.

the German population and voters." He goes on to show the German population by the Census of 1840 and demonstrates that the number of naturalizations and those reaching the voting age could not be the four or five thousand claimed, but rather two thousand five hundred at the most.¹⁰⁹

The historian, Ford, maintains that although the German was found in the legislature and in offices in city departments, his number could have been much greater as a political influence. But the language barrier stood in his way, and the new immigrants had to work hard to earn a living, and had little time to participate in political life.¹¹⁰

And, even though the German population of Cincinnati rose substantially by the 1840s, the number of Germans in the Ohio legislature and in Congress as reported by Kickhoff,¹¹¹ was hardly proportionate to their numbers, and failed to rise with their increased significance.

In 1843 the Native American party began to function again, but now the immigrants organized the Germans of Ohio and Indiana into the "German Democratic Organization of Hamilton County," which wrote a constitution declaring "Equality and full justice for all men, regardless of religious or political stand and belief." In 1844

¹⁰⁹ *Cist, Cincinnati Miscellany*, Vol. II, p. 109.

¹¹⁰ *Ford, History of Cincinnati*, p. 142.

¹¹¹ *Kickhoff, op. cit.*, pp. 295-6.

Cincinnati responded to the news of Nativist victories in Philadelphia and Boston by suggesting the Germans unite to advise each other. Columbus, Dayton, Louisville, Indianapolis, and Madison, as well as many smaller places followed the example set by the Cincinnati Germans.¹¹²

The reaction against the Cincinnati Germans increased, and led the Volksblatt in November 1848 to ask, "What is it that leads the Whigs and the Nativists to reproach the Germans and the immigrants so? They say we are not ready to think and act for ourselves, even after a twenty-one year period, or to participate in government."¹¹³

And Mrs. Tafel, a German immigrant into Cincinnati, records in her diary for June and July of 1849 that her father, when going to market, "was jeered at by urchins on account of his spectacles and his beard. As soon as he would appear they would yell: 'Here comes the Dutchman.' Because of that he went out of the house only before sunrise."¹¹⁴

The horrible height of the No-Nothing movement was reached in April, 1855, when the defeat of a No-Nothing Candidate led to a general attack on the Germans, with many deaths and much destruction of property, and the emigration of hundreds of German families.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Ibid., p. 294.

¹¹³ Volksblatt, November 23, 1848.

¹¹⁴ Koester, op. cit., p. 20.

¹¹⁵ Klauprecht, Deutsche Chronik, pp. 187-92.

By 1860, when the movement had died down, the German vote had reached a considerable number. The German vote in Hamilton County in 1860 was already more than the entire vote of the county in 1850.¹¹⁶

The introduction of the immigrant known as the "48er" was not without its repercussions, since a great number of these German refugees came to Cincinnati and through their critical intelligence and artistic sensibilities, contributed immeasurably to the intellectual and cultural life of the city.¹¹⁷ But the 48ers were also a fresh irritating element, whose prime striving in the early 50s was to agitate another German revolution.¹¹⁸ This was hardly conducive to peaceful relations with the immigrant loopy Americans.

Nevertheless the immigrants of the preceding generations had paved the way for the revolutionaries and economic refugees of 1848, and they were thus received with a warm welcome.¹¹⁹

The reaction of the Cincinnati Germans to the plight of their German brothers was one of general enthusiasm and action. Out of the society for humanitarian works arose the "German Patriotic Society," whose purpose was to support the freedom movement in Germany and the patriots who were to follow freedom to the United States. The Cincinnati Germans got together in all sorts of groups to help the

¹¹⁷Rosebaum and Weisenburger, op. cit., p. 177.

¹¹⁸Cincinnati Turnfest-Fuehrer, pp. 73-4.

¹¹⁹Klauprecht, Deutsche Chronik, p. 180.

old homeland. The arrival of Hecker and his friends in Cincinnati in 1848 afforded the opportunity for a great approving ovation.¹²⁰

The Volksblatt¹²¹ reflects the general enthusiasm especially in its publishing the address of a St. Louis citizen, who declared, "We are sympathetic warmly to your fate. We left the homeland in our childhood. We sought a nation where the human being was worth something, and in our new country we have found the one land of the earth where freedom exists for all mankind." The general tone of the American reaction was embodied in such idealism and emotional seeds.

After the second uprising in Baden and the Pfalz in 1849, the number of refugees increased even more, especially to the West. The Volksblatt¹²² predicted that this year would prove to bring an enormous storm of immigration. This beginning was underway "to find brotherly freedom, peace, fortune, and comfort in the land for the oppressed."

But the societies for support of political refugees had learned a hard lesson, for many other Germans without work, and those who hated work feigned the status of refugee and let themselves be supported. The Volksblatt (ibid.) warned that the refugees would be welcomed when they were sincere in their beliefs in equality of men. But when these should come with the idea that America is a land of

¹²⁰Eickhoff, op. cit., pp. 301-2.

¹²¹Volksblatt, January 23, 1849.

¹²²Volksblatt, May 24, 1849.

"milk and honey," then "We must regret their arrival and it would be better for such to stay at home."

Many agitators arrived at the beginning of the 50s with adventurous plans to place the German revolution in action again. These men came to America because they were positive that through their dealings with the "Free men in free America" their ideas for a better world would win force.¹²³

Gottfried Kindel, German poet, arrived on November 1 in Cincinnati to collect a sum of two million Thaler for renewing the revolution in Germany. A large portion of the Germans agreed or made verbal promises to the "German National Support" but a number of rival German revolutionary societies sprang up;¹²⁴ groups were numerous to take money out of the pockets of Germans—Freie Maenner Verein, Arbeiter Verein, and many newspaper crusades.¹²⁵

But the 48ers were disappointed with what they found in America, and began immediately to criticize the American republic. Their stay in America appeared a temporary thing, and they awaited only the fulfillment of their utopian plans. With the "Wheelinger Congress" in September of 1852, they began to pursue a political course. Not only were the Americans inadequate, but their fellow Germans had failed to form a political party and to take an active

¹²³Tenner, op. cit., p. 57.

¹²⁴Klauprecht, Deutsche Chronik, p. 185.

¹²⁵Tenner, op. cit., p. 57.

part in rectifying the wrongs done to them. The 48ers formed a society of workers in Cincinnati to emancipate the worker from capital's clutches. The older Germans looked on these new "greens" as if they were "half-Indian." But the radicals founded the Hochwaechter and the Independent, and proceeded to attack religion.¹²⁶

The arrival of the 48ers had other intellectual consequences for Cincinnati. The Turner Society was founded November, 1848, and in the same year the first German Lodge of Odd Fellows, the "Germania Lodge" and the Order of Druids.¹²⁷ The first German theater received its boost through the immigration of the 48ers, for The Turners became connected with its development, and the first group of professional German actors came in the 1848 immigration.¹²⁸

The Turner was the system of physical education introduced in Germany by E. L. Jahn, who held that a rational system of physical education should be instituted to revive the patriotic sympathies of the German people. It was in 1848 that the German emigrants brought the Turner idea to Cincinnati, where American Turnerism was founded.¹²⁹

¹²⁶Richhoff, op. cit., p. 302.

¹²⁷Klauprecht, Deutsche Chronik, p. 180.

¹²⁸Ralph Wood, "Geschichte des Deutschen Theaters von Cincinnati," (dissertation), published in Deutsch Amerikanische Geschichtsblaetter, Vol. 32, 1932, p. 421.

¹²⁹The First Hundred Years, Cincinnati Central Turners, 1848-1948, (souvenir program), p. 22.

The Germans reacted quite favorably to its founding, but contemporary reports indicate that they were often persecuted by American elements. They obtained their flag from the volunteer troop organizations which had hoped to aid Germany, but could not attain their goal.¹³⁰

Despite the reaction against Turnerism, it was actually quite American. If anything it was a haven and anchoring place for German emigrants. No one could belong unless he were an American citizen or declared his intention to become one.¹³¹ The political ideas of the Turners, for which they did not agitate by participation in party politics, were very democratic—the secret ballot, referendum, initiative, recall, direct election of United States Senators, proportional representation, and international arbitration and conciliation.¹³²

Thus the ideals of the 48ers became permanently embodied in what became one of the most influential of all German organizations. After a while the new immigration lost its sting, and the Greens and Greys became reconciled. The new Republican party, with Fremont, united the Germans, and most of them stood behind Lincoln in 1860.

The outbreak of the Civil war was another unifying factor for the Germans and their patriotism bound them together. Three German

¹³⁰ Koester, op. cit., p. 21

¹³¹ The First Hundred Years, p. 22.

¹³² Ibid., p. 25.

military companies from Cincinnati went to Washington, and several other German regiments were prepared. Thousands answered the call, and the entire portion of Cincinnati Germans formed an army. "More than a third of all soldiers, who went into battle from Ohio, were Germans, and there were eleven pure German regiments."¹³³

The response of the German to the Civil War drew his attention away from his former problems, to which he never was to return. Thus the Civil War marks in Cincinnati the end of a German era of non-assimilation although the German element remained distinctive even though better integrated.

¹³³ Bickhoff, op. cit., p. 305.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The movement of German peoples out of their homeland was a significant occurrence in the 1800s because it represented a loss of talent, ability, and skill for Germany and again for America. The large emigration from Germany was almost completely directed to America, and was confined largely to the mid-nineteenth century. Not only were the numbers then the greatest, but also the significant contributors to American life came within these waves.

The movement of Germans to America reflects the poverty stricken life that Germany offered in contrast to America. The lack of hope that the future presented was a facet of every phase of life in the Fatherland. Land would have to be divided among the children, taxes were high if not overwhelming, and military duty lay ahead of the young men. Crop failures repeated a devastating pattern of hunger, working conditions offered little hope for advancement, and the lot of the small farmer facing payments to relieve him from feudal obligation drove him to desperation.

But the economic problems were further complicated by increasing government restrictions in reaction to the demands for greater political and religious freedom. Rebellion in the Hambacher Fest, and the revolutionary attempts of 1830 and 1848 ended with participants disillusioned and searching for fulfillment through other immediate

means. Religious life, not effecting a major emigration, represented another area in which personal freedom could not be exercised.

One result of such conditions was the exodus of several million Germans in the 1840s and 1850s, mostly headed for American shores. In contrast to the states of Germany, the United States had been painted as a land which offered fulfillment of opportunity economically, politically, and religiously. Many books were circulated explaining America. Pamphlets, newspapers, letters, publicity of agents from railroads, ship lines, and private travel organizations, served as a means of perpetuating the image of a new country which had vast stretches of unclaimed land waiting for him who would seek them. Democracy prevailed, allowing freedom of thought, action, and religion, and providing the framework in which a German community could recreate a new Germany. Popular opinion described America as new and crude, but this served only as another proof of the opportunity, for it was the raw materials of personal and group success that America offered.

The German emigration was one directed primarily toward the American West, where land was cheap and abundant. But the typical German was not a pioneer. He was found behind, rather than on or ahead of the frontier. He followed the path of least resistance, the Erie Canal route, to Cincinnati and into the West. Not being a pioneer he followed the easier path by buying land already cleared rather than federal public land. Although the most obvious economic characteristic of the German was his attachment to land, he was not absent in the cities. Many Germans stopped on their way to the West in various

cities along the way, where other Germans were found. The Forty-Eighter was especially a cosmopolitan type that sought intellectual labor in the cities.

The German belonged to a cohesive group of emigrants. They tended to come either with groups, such as settlement societies, or in family groups. When individual migrations took place, the years following usually saw other members of the family or friends joining them in America. The migration tended to congregate in German centers and where fellow countrymen could be found. The result was a holding up of the process of assimilation. The German community, as evidenced by the Cincinnati example, created German life in America with a German language press, churches, and organized activities such as the many clubs. Connections with the old country were prolonged through letters, as well as through celebration of German holidays and the formation of emergency groups to support fellow Germans in times of trouble, such as the 1848 revolution, or when problems of emigration became exceedingly difficult. A German felt it a serious responsibility to help his fellow countrymen whenever the opportunity arose.

The German element in Cincinnati serves to demonstrate the distinctive mid-nineteenth century characteristic of the emigration. The non-assimilation of the German in groups is more a form of isolation by separation rather than non-participation in American life. The German group was divided into diverse camps based on political and religious differences, but these breaches were healed when the group faced a common threat such as the Nativist movement, or when the

country faced a common problem such as the Civil War.

The total movement took on the characteristic of a sheer business enterprise when redemption agents, ship captains, railroad agents, settlement societies, and travel agents attempted to reach the prospective emigrant through various media and the creation of a favorable America concept. Eventually these efforts combined with the hazardous conditions of travel led to a reaction, which in some cases discouraged emigration and which led to the organization of various groups and to the investigation by German and American officials. These efforts helped to better the conditions under which the process of emigration continued.

The attraction of America was strong. Not only did America provide freedom from the restrictions of life in Germany and the opportunity of fulfillment, but it held the newcomers within its boundaries despite some of the hardships of American life. Furthermore, the emigration movement tended to perpetuate itself. The newcomers to American shores tended to draw further from the German population.

This process did not exhaust itself until the German situation essentially changed with the unification of Germany, and even after this there were significant waves of immigrants. But by this time, the German immigration was overshadowed by other factors. The German had begun to assimilate into American society, even if as a "hyphenated" America. After the Civil war, the German ceased to present the most formidable immigrant problem. Other problems in

immigration, such as the shift from Northwestern Europe to Southeastern Europe overshadowed him.

The significance of the German emigration has been permanent. The contributions of the political refugees, the hard steady work of the average newcomer, and the musical, cultural, and other typical activities of the German community can today be discerned. But by 1900 the main force of emigration from Germany had exhausted itself. The American continent had filled up, closing many of the opportunities which had once attracted the German. Simultaneously German life has offered greater personal fulfillment economically and politically.

Thus the German emigration, which by 1860 had reached its peak in numbers as well as in contributions, essentially came to a halt by the end of the nineteenth century. Yet the vestiges of the largest emigration to American shores in the 1800s will continue to be found in many centers in the United States.

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